



Queers zap Duke's dinner-for-dough

150 protest outside lavish fundraiser in the wake of further anti-gay foster care revelations

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — Hostility greeted demonstrators at both ends of an Aug. 25 protest in which 200 lesbians, gay men and their supporters marched through the theater district to decry the homophobic foster care policy of Gov. Michael Dukakis. Hecklers at the beginning of the route shouted anti-gay epithets and Boston police officers roughly shoved protesters at their final destination — the Wang Center on Tremont Street, where a \$10,000 per plate fundraiser was underway to support Dukakis' bid for the U.S. presidency.

Participants in the protest sponsored by MASS ACT OUT and the Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee (GLDC) told *GCN* that the well-attended twilight demo marked a rekindled energy among lesbian and gay activists after the dog days of August. With community debate simmering over the Dukakis vs. George Bush debacle, speakers at the protest stressed that Dukakis must continue to be challenged on his anti-gay stances. A flyer distributed to protesters and passersby stated, "We will continue to oppose Dukakis and his homophobia at every opportunity, until he overturns the foster care policy, and issues a formal, public

apology to the lesbian and gay community."

The protest kicked off from the Boylston Street T stop with Sue Hyde, staff member of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), reciting a satiric anti-Dukakis limerick. Hyde, who helped organize protests against the Massachusetts foster care policy when it was instigated three years ago, reminded the crowd that the regulations discriminate against gay men and lesbians by virtually prohibiting them from foster parenting.

"We won't let this policy be forgotten during the presidential campaign," she said. "The Massachusetts community should congratulate itself. Lesbians and gay men around the country have turned out to denounce Dukakis' foster care policy because of the momentum we started."

The protesters proceeded to march through clogged streets to the site of the fundraiser, called Victory Fund '88. Demonstrators were met with silence and/or derisive stares as they began circling the sidewalk outside the Wang Center. While well-heeled Democrats sidled past to attend

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Mass. Atty. General nails Capitol cops

By Jennie McKnight

BOSTON — Massachusetts Attorney General James Shannon has filed charges against three Capitol police officers involved in a State House demonstration last winter in which several gay and lesbian protesters were injured. The complaint against the officers claims the civil rights of the protesters were violated and seeks to prevent the officers from harassing lesbians and gay men and from performing law enforcement duties at lesbian and gay Statehouse actions until the officers are properly trained by the Commonwealth.

The demonstration was held Jan. 4 to protest the failure of the state senate to approve the long-stalled lesbian and gay rights bill. During the protest, the brutal tactics used by the Capitol police were documented by several news photographers and witnessed by countless television viewers of the evening news, as well as hundreds of participants in the MASS ACT OUT-sponsored protest. Fourteen demonstrators were arrested during the planned civil disobedience, and charged with trespassing.

Katherine Triantifillou, the attorney who defended the "State House 14" at their



Statehouse cops arresting protester

trial, said of Shannon's action, "I was aware of the progress of the investigation [of the officers] and I'm delighted the complaint has finally been filed." Triantifillou added that Shannon's action was "forceful and a good step that sends out a clear message."

Rob Gale, one of the protesters arrested at the demonstration, said he was very excited that the Attorney General had finally brought charges against the violent cops.

GCN was unable to obtain a copy of Shannon's complaint or the names of the offending officers by presstime.



Acting up at the Republicans' party

More coverage of the gay/AIDS activism at the convention in New Orleans

By David Birman

NEW YORK — At their weekly meeting Aug. 22, members of ACT UP/New York described the week of gay and AIDS protests at the Republican National Convention as "the most daring action ACT UP has done yet."

ACT UP, the AIDS protest group, worked in a coalition with New Orleans, Louisiana, and national gay organizations on a series of angry and provocative demonstrations on AIDS and gay issues during the New Orleans gathering, Aug. 15-18. (For coverage of events during the first half of the convention week, see *GCN* Vol. 16, No. 7).

But the AIDS protesters were themselves "zapped" by an extreme right-wing group, the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) throughout the convention week. YAF members, mostly well-dressed collegiate men and women, screamed anti-gay epithets such as "You brought it [AIDS] on yourselves," "Save the Gerbils," and an old-time favorite of homophobes, "Faahaaags!"

On Wednesday, Aug. 17, ACT UP participated in a "speak out" on homophobia, organized by Gay and Lesbian VOICE (Voters United in Coalition for the Election) '88. VOICE is a coalition of national gay and civil rights and AIDS organizations, including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign Fund. Speakers included Urvashi Vaid and Sue Hyde, both staff members at NGLTF, who displayed recent, notorious examples of homophobia, and then "trashed" them. Hyde read from the Supreme Court's decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, upholding state sodomy laws, and then threw the document in a trash bag.

The speak out took place in Lafayette Park, designated during the convention as a "free speech area." But the gay speak out was one of the only well-attended free

speech events during the entire convention, aside from rallies by a cultish youth group known as "skinheads" and by a loose-knit anarchist group.

YAF extremists tried to shout down the AIDS and gay activists, but the loudspeaker system drowned out YAF's bigoted counter-demonstration. However, many mainstream media flocked to the crowd of screaming YAF members, who wore surgical masks, presumably because they feared "catching" AIDS from the protesters.

One passionate New Orleans speaker named John described himself as "dying of AIDS." Later in his remarks, John said that ACT UP had made a deep impression on him about fighting back against AIDS, and he added, "I guess I should stop saying I'm dying from AIDS ... I'm *living* with AIDS." Many activists in the crowd were moved to tears.

On Wednesday evening, ACT UP organized a roundtable discussion with local AIDS activists. About 75 people attended a very productive three-and-a-half-hour session, which resulted in the creation of a New Orleans direct action organization. Activists compared the roles of AIDS service organizations such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis with the role played by such direct action groups as ACT UP. Most people in the room seemed to agree that the AIDS movement needs both types of groups.

Representatives of the New Orleans AIDS Task Force (NO AIDS Task Force) said that Louisiana is facing a crisis when its portion of federally-funded AZT subsidies runs out in the coming weeks.

The activists at the roundtable quickly agreed on a Thursday evening "zap" at the entrance gate to the Republican convention, to draw national attention to the drug shortage. The action was timed to precede Vice

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Quote of the week

"Are people talking about 'The New Lesbianism' in your town? Does it sound like well-dressed young ladies who don't hate men anymore and who just happen to be into muff-diving?"

— Kris Kovick, a San Francisco-based lesbian cartoonist, commenting in a recent letter on an issue that has her West Coast town a-buzz. It may be coming to your town!!

Episcopal AIDS conference in Vermont

HARTFORD, Conn — Louie Nassaney, a gay man living with AIDS for five years and an Associate Teacher with the Louise Hay Institute, will be a featured speaker and workshop leader at the Third Annual New England Episcopal Conference on AIDS: "Learning from AIDS: Replacing Prejudice with Love," to be held Sept. 22-24, 1988, at Mont Marie Conference Center, Holyoke, Massachusetts. Sponsored by the New England Episcopal AIDS Network, the conference will focus on the relationship between physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Plenaries and workshops include "AIDS: Body and Spirit," "All God's Children Have AIDS," and "The Church as a Global Network Responding to AIDS."

Nassaney will also lead a special one-day Louise Hay Training on Saturday, Sept. 24.



Louie Nassaney

Open to non-conference participants, this workshop will explore challenges to conventional healing therapies and information about alternative healing techniques.

Registration for the entire conference is \$150 including lodging and meals. The fee for the Saturday Hay Institute Training is \$50; Scholarships are available for people with AIDS or who are HIV-antibody positive. To register, contact Episcopal Conference — AIDS, c/o Bruce M. Howden, 32 North Champlain Street, Burlington, VT 05401. For additional information, contact The Rev. Thaddeus Bennett, AIDS Ministries, 1335 Asylum Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105, (203) 233-4481.

□ Dan Page

Boss of vaccine trial participant got axe, too

BOSTON — Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) has filed a second complaint charging Sentry Federal Savings Bank of Hyannis, Mass., with discrimination. The complaint, filed Aug. 17 with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), alleges that Richard W. Cooke, president of a Sentry subsidiary, was terminated from his position because he refused to fire Tom Crehore, a company vice president. Crehore was terminated by a higher-up on June 1. GLAD has already filed a complaint on Crehore's behalf alleging he was fired because of a perception that he was at risk for AIDS due to his participation in an AIDS vaccine trial program (See *GCN*, Vol. 16, No. 6).

The second MCAD complaint states that

Cooke believed Sentry wanted to fire Crehore because he was participating in the AIDS vaccine study; Cooke refused to do so. Cooke was terminated on April 20. Cooke claims his firing violated a state statute which prohibits the discharge of a person because she or he has opposed any discriminatory practices forbidden by law.

According to Denise McWilliams, director of GLAD's AIDS Law Project and attorney for Cooke and Crehore, "It is critically important to the success of experimental AIDS programs that people willing to volunteer be protected from the consequences of AIDS-related discrimination. It is equally important that those persons who oppose such discrimination also receive the protection of the law."

□ Elizabeth Pincus

Clean needle distributor arrested

BOSTON — A man who founded a grassroots organization which distributes clean needles and syringes to drug users in Massachusetts and Connecticut was arrested on Aug. 17. Jon Parker was charged with violating a state law prohibiting possession or distribution of needles and syringes without a medical prescription. Parker, who said he organized the Boston AIDS Brigade to help curb the spread of AIDS, was picked up by police after a bystander reported someone was passing out needles in Roxbury, according to the *Boston Globe*.

A December trial date has been set for Parker, who was involved in protests this spring when the city was considering the implementation of a trial clean needle exchange program. In an interview in the Quincy-based *Patriot Ledger*, Parker said he would contest the latest charges against him because he believed his actions were important to lowering the incidence of AIDS.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

Grape boycott continues after Chavez ends fast

DELANO, Calif. — Thousands of union supporters turned out on Aug. 21 to break bread with United Farm Workers (UFW) leader Cesar Chavez, who ended his 36-day fast at a celebratory Mass attended by the children of Robert Kennedy. The late senator had shared a Roman Catholic Communion with Chavez over 20 years ago, when Chavez ended his first major fast to call attention to unfair practices and poor working conditions for farm laborers. Chavez' current fast was begun to publicize the ongoing boycott of California table grapes; the boycott was renewed in 1984 to protest the alleged misuse of pesticides by grape growers.

Jesse Jackson, who attended the outdoor Mass along with several movie stars and politicians, began a three-day fast of his own to call attention to the grape boycott. Jackson told a UPI reporter that he was kicking off a series of fasts to create a "chain of suffering" in support of the UFW, and he said he hoped others would follow suit. The UFW, which has long lent support to lesbian and gay concerns, has encouraged the lesbian/gay community to participate in the grape boycott.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

NY to distribute clean needles to some

NEW YORK — City health officials said on Aug. 11 that they would begin a long-debated experiment to distribute free, clean needles to 200 IV drug users in an attempt to slow the spread of HIV infection. The experiment was approved by the State Health Department and was judged legal by local prosecutors.

Needles are already distributed in several countries, including England and the Netherlands, and the idea has been debated in cities across the United States, including Boston. To date, however, no government agency has distributed needles in this country. A private agency was to begin needle

distribution in Portland, Oregon, under a grant from the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR), but that project has been temporarily delayed while the agency applies for liability insurance.

In New York, as in Massachusetts and nine other states, clean needles are not available to consumers. The New York needle program will initially involve 200 individuals, selected from the waiting lists of addicts seeking treatment. A second group of 200 will be chosen as a comparison group. They will not receive clean needles, but, like those receiving needles, their drug behavior and HIV antibody status will be monitored (HIV is a virus thought by many to be a cause of AIDS).

In New York City, needle sharing is now thought to be the leading mode of HIV transmission.

□ Paul-David Wadler

Mother of girl with AIDS to appeal 'glass cage' ruling

TAMPA, Fla. — A mother who won the right for her daughter who has AIDS to attend school is appealing the ruling because it requires the girl to remain behind a glass partition separating her from her classmates. The mother, Rosa Martinez, a nurse who adopted her 6-year-old daughter Eliana five years ago, told the *New York Times*, "This is the closest Eliana has been to a classroom, but I can't send her to school to sit in a cage."

The 8-by-10 foot enclosure, toward the back of the room, must have a large plexiglass window and a sound system, as well as a toilet and a desk, according to Federal District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich's ruling. The child would be required to stay in the booth until she learns to stop biting her thumb and is toilet trained. Children would be allowed to play with her only if their parents signed consent forms.

Judge Kovachevich said she had tried to address the concerns of the mother as well as those of the school. The school wanted to continue its policy of sending a teacher to Eliana's home for one hour each day.

"She was deprived of family, and we became that," Martinez said. "She was deprived of health and we gave her the best medical attention we could. Now I don't want her deprived of an education. She needs more than one hour a day to progress. And she needs friends."

□ Paul-David Wadler

Teens not playing safe

SAN FRANCISCO — Despite warnings from health educators and parents, few teens are wearing their rubbers (or practicing other forms of safer sex). Of 500 sexually-active adolescents studied by University of California/San Francisco (UCSF) psychologists, only two percent of the young women and eight percent of the young men reported using condoms every time they had sex. Furthermore, researchers stated, approximately 30 percent engaged in unprotected anal intercourse. Susan Kegeles, a UCSF psychologist quoted in the *Boston Globe*, commented "this is of particular concern because we believe teenagers may be the next group at risk of AIDS. Not only do sexually active adolescents have high rates of other sexually transmitted diseases, but they also have high rates of pregnancy, which means they are not using condoms. These teens also have multiple sex partners. All of these factors put them at risk for AIDS."

□ Liz Galst

Fed AZT subsidies to end

WASHINGTON — Unless local and state agencies act quickly, 6,000 people around the country will cease to receive federal money for AZT next month. The \$30 million federal grant to subsidize the AIDS treatment for people who do not qualify for Medicaid or have private insurance is scheduled to expire Sept. 30.

The Federal grant was approved last year on a one-time only basis to state govern-

ments. In order to win Congressional approval, sponsors of the measure assured they would not try to extend it after a year. "In a sense it was a deal with the devil because no one in June 1987 thought the problem would disappear by October 1988," a Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee staff member told the *Boston Globe*, adding "We hoped we'd be further along in addressing the problems of AIDS health care expenses." When Senator Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) recently pleaded for \$5 million to buy some time for the expiring AZT assistance program, a House-Senate appropriations conference committee refused.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Director Deborah Prothrow-Stith told the *Globe* that there were sufficient funds in the state's portion of the federal grant to continue subsidizing AZT for another year. There are currently about 80 people with AIDS receiving subsidies.

□ Paul-David Wadler

Pregnancy anyone?

BOSTON — A series of orientation meetings for lesbians and single women interested in donor insemination are being sponsored by the Fenway Community Health Center. Meetings will cover donor screening, fertility awareness, costs, legal, medical, and psychological issues. The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 9. For more information please call Lisa at (617) 267-1538.

□ Jennie McKnight

Survey studies AIDS law worldwide

BOSTON — A growing number of countries are passing discriminatory laws and travel restrictions ostensibly to fight the spread of AIDS, according to a study by Larry Gostin, executive director of the American Society of Law and Medicine and a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health. These laws are based on fears that AIDS is a "foreigners' disease" and not a world-wide problem, according to the *New York Times*. In the U.S., Gostin found "at least 50 criminal prosecutions" of people who have tested positive for HIV antibodies and numerous statutes calling for quarantine, isolation, or criminal prosecution.

AIDS-related laws in Cuba and the Soviet Union are among the toughest. Cuba tests all returning citizens, including soldiers, for HIV antibodies and currently keeps about 150 people in perpetual quarantine. Soviet officials recently passed a law calling for compulsory testing of so-called high-risk groups including IV drug users, gay men and prostitutes; foreign diplomats may also be tested. Bolivia has instituted mandatory testing, notification of sexual partners, and possible imprisonment.

Gostin's survey, sent to health officials in every country, found that 44 percent of the 77 countries which responded have AIDS-specific legislation, the first time health officials have developed laws covering only one disease. The study also found that 21 countries have national educational task forces for AIDS.

□ Paul-David Wadler

AAC to move

BOSTON — The AIDS Action Committee (AAC) will move this fall from cramped offices in Copley Square to spacious new digs at 131 Clarendon Street, just across from the YWCA. Three full floors of the building, which houses the Hard Rock Cafe on the street level, will be leased by AAC to accommodate 55 staff members, 1100 volunteers and numerous clients. The Clarendon Street site is wheelchair accessible and twice the size of AAC's current quarters. There will be 24-hour security at the new location.

Private companies and foundations are helping with the move, which is expected to occur in October.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

NEWSNOTES COMPILED BY
JENNIE MCKNIGHT



Women donate blood for PWAs

Doctor forces les/gay-sponsored blood drives out of Castro

Irwin Memorial Blood Bank angers many by moving drives out of "high risk" neighborhood

By Alicia Cobb

SAN FRANCISCO — Abrupt relocation of two AIDS blood drives here resulted in decreased donations, public confusion, and unrest among members of San Francisco's gay community. The drives were to be held in the heavily gay Castro Street area, known as the hub of AIDS/ARC care and support services in the city, but they were disrupted by the vocal opposition of Dr. Lorraine Day, Chief of Orthopedic Surgery at San Francisco General Hospital.

One of the drives was sponsored by Arm in Arm, a lesbian and gay volunteer organization that collects blood "credits" for people with AIDS or ARC who cannot afford transfusion costs. Arm in Arm, in conjunction with Irwin Memorial Blood Bank, has held successful blood drives quarterly since October 1987 in the Castro area. Prior to the July 20 drive Dr. Day telephoned Irwin's director, Vince Yalon, to protest the upcoming event. She complained that because the Castro is a "high risk"

area, donations taken there would increase the risk of contaminating the blood supply. She appeared on two television news broadcasts and sent letters to the press to publicize her position. On July 17, Irwin, fearing a media war, requested that Arm in Arm hold their event at the blood bank itself. Although Irwin provided transportation from the Castro area to the blood bank, only 53 of the expected 100 units were collected. Donors surveyed overwhelmingly preferred the Castro site because of its convenient location, supportive atmosphere, and gay and lesbian sponsorship.

Penni Kimmel, coordinator of Arm in Arm, issued a press release disputing Day's statements: "These allegations are not only false; the opposite is true. Arm in Arm's donor base is 92 percent women, of whom the majority are lesbian, a category [U.S.] Surgeon General [C. Everett] Koop has declared to be the safest among blood

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Fisons discloses AP clinical trial info

Pressure from ACT UP/Boston yields concessions from pharmaceutical giant

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — As a result of negotiations between ACT UP/Boston and Fisons Pharmaceutical Corporation on Aug. 16, the Bedford-based drug company has agreed to provide listings about its clinical trials of aerosolized pentamidine (AP) in the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR) Directory. The Directory allows people with AIDS (PWAs) to locate drug trials, often the only sources of life-prolonging AIDS treatments.

The agreement was one of several concessions reached between ACT UP/Boston and Fisons at the meeting, which was arranged after ACT UP/Boston staged a protest at the offices of the pharmaceutical giant in early August (see *GCN*, Vol. 16, No. 6.) Fisons — which is competing with Chicago's Lyphomed Corporation for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) contract for AP — had refused to release any information about their clinical trials of AP, citing "proprietary interests." But since the Aug. 16 meeting, Fisons has agreed "to seek ways to provide information about the availability of clinical trials," according to a joint press release issued by ACT UP/Boston and Fisons.

The joint statement explained that concessions were reached because "ACT UP/Boston and Fisons Corporation agree

that the rapid completion of control clinical trials of aerosolized pentamidine for prophylaxis of pneumocystis carinii pneumonia [PCP — the number one cause of death among PWAs] is in the best interest of all of us."

According to ACT UP/Boston member Steven Busby, Fisons realized the company had a better chance of winning FDA licensing approval for AP if it could speedily recruit more participants for clinical trials. "[Fisons] understood it was in their own self-interest to provide information to the community," Busby explained. "That's the primary reason they're cooperating. It wasn't as much an enlightened meeting as a discussion of mutual self-benefit. We feel a little strange, but sometimes that [approach] is helpful to make progress."

As well as agreeing to list in the AmFAR Directory, Fisons released information on the characteristics of its nebulizer, a device which converts liquid pentamidine into droplets for direct inhalation into the lungs. The company disclosed specific information on tests comparing droplet sizes of various nebulizers; this data is crucial to determining effective administration of AP. Fisons also revealed that its nebulizer, called the Fisonneb, will be on the market this fall.

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Paul Cronan, winner of early AIDS suit against phone company, dies of AIDS

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — A gay man who fought to save his job at New England Telephone (NET) in the face of repeated harassment and threats died of AIDS Aug. 18. Paul Cronan, a 32-year-old Dorchester resident, was well-known in town for his courageous legal battle with NET following his 1985 diagnosis with ARC (AIDS-Related Complex). In the wake of Cronan's death at Brighton's St. John of God Hospital, NET announced it will make a \$10,000 donation toward AIDS-related research.

Friends report that Cronan maintained dignity and humor throughout his three-year bout with ARC and AIDS. According to David Casey, Cronan's attorney, Cronan was sometimes frightened during his struggle with NET, but determined to fight for his rights and those of others facing discrimination. "No one taught me more about courage and the horrifying reality of this disease," Casey told the *Boston Globe*.

Cronan had been an NET lineman for fifteen years before he was diagnosed with ARC in the spring of 1985. Word of his diagnosis spread throughout the company after he explained to a supervisor the reason for his frequent medical absences. Cronan began to experience on-the-job harassment and threats of lynching and other violence. Following an extended medical leave, Cronan sought a transfer from his South Boston work site to NET's Needham location — he said he was fearful of his safety. When the transfer was refused, he filed a \$1.5 million suit alleging that his employer had violated his rights to privacy and medical confidentiality.

Casey handled the case, which received



Paul Cronan much attention in the press, as a cooperating attorney of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In October 1986, Cronan accepted an out-of-court settlement for an undisclosed amount, returning him to active status with NET. The settlement included a provision allowing for the transfer to Needham. But when Cronan arrived there on Oct. 22 for his first day back at work, 30 co-workers walked off the job to protest his presence.

According to friends of Cronan, he re- Continued on page 6

Dinner

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the pricey dinner, protesters chanted and waved signs reading, "Foster Equality" and "Silence is the voice of complicity — How can you support bigotry?"

When demo participants jammed into the lobby and stepped up their chanting, the protest became more confrontational. Without warning, police and private security staff began prodding protesters and pushing them out the doors. The scuffle continued on the sidewalk for a brief while before protesters dispersed, pickets still held high.

A short while later, Michael and Kitty Dukakis rolled up to the curb in a limousine, apparently timing their arrival to avoid the

crowd and strong police presence, which effectively barricaded off the dissidents. But they said they felt the protest — and Dukakis' tail-end glimpse of unrest — reminded the presidential candidate of the ongoing resistance of lesbians and gay men.

According to members of MASS ACT OUT and GLDC, the lesbian/gay community's anger over the homophobic foster care policy has been exacerbated by the governor's recent budgetary maneuvers (see *GCN*, Vol. 16, No. 4). In mid-July, Dukakis approved a 1989 budget line item which requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to comply with the foster care policy or risk losing its \$8.3 million in funding. "Dukakis continues to insist that his [foster care] policy ... has been 'misunderstood' by the lesbian and gay community," stated the



Marilyn Humphries

Lesbian and gay protesters at Dukakis fundraiser at the Wang Center in Boston, Aug. 25

demonstration. Nearly all the protesters had left, though a handful of remaining MASS ACT OUT members scrambled to reassemble and greet the governor with chants of protest as he walked into the Wang Center. Several protesters who witnessed Dukakis' late entry told *GCN* that the effort to confront him was stymied by the dwindled

MASS ACT OUT/GLDC flyer. "It was so 'misunderstood' by us that he decided to sign it into law this year.

"The message that Dukakis sends is clear. The governor believes that gay men and lesbians are dangerous to children. This stereotype is one of the deepest and most offensive

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Dialogue between gay and straight leftists at the Guardian

Dear *GCN*:

As the AIDS crisis deepens, lesbian/gay and AIDS activists on the left have grown increasingly impatient with their “straight comrades” for not taking the crisis as seriously as the situation warrants. Particularly disturbing has been the left’s failure to comprehend how racism, sexism and heterosexism have intersected to create and sustain this genocidal epidemic.

On June 2, gay/AIDS activist journalists held a historic first meeting with the full staff of the *Guardian* (“for 40 years, the left’s independent radical newsweekly”) to address precisely those issues.

First, we made it clear that any genuine leftist must understand that lesbian/gay liberation (not merely “rights”) is as integral to the radical transformation of society as the liberation of women, Third World people, and the working class. We also argued that the historic ambivalence of the left — including the *Guardian* — toward “importance” of sexuality and sexual liberation (“it’s just a lifestyle issue”) has effectively hamstringing its response to AIDS. Similarly, the traditional reluctance of predominantly white left groups and media to take on racism has resulted in a profound and deadly silence around AIDS in Third World communities. The *Guardian*, for instance, has never run articles about either the concerns of lesbian/gay people of color or the problematic reality of AIDS organizing within Black and Latino communities.

The trigger for the *Guardian* staff meeting came when one of us — former *Guardian* “gay/AIDS” writer Jim Kemp — spoke on a panel discussion of “Where Is the Left on AIDS?” at the Socialist Scholars Conference, an event co-sponsored by the *Guardian* and held on April 9 in New York City. That speech — which criticized the left media (including the *Guardian*) for their inadequate, often heterosexist, coverage of the AIDS crisis — was subsequently printed in *GCN* (Vol. 15, No. 41). Two weeks later, the special staff meeting took place.

We know that one meeting does not a revolution make. Whether that meeting was intended primarily as public relations damage control or as the first move toward full engagement with lesbian/gay and AIDS activists remains to be seen.

We did receive strong assurances of the *Guardian*’s solidarity with lesbians and gays and of their openness to our long list of story ideas. Yet many of the most contentious issues remain unresolved: the crucial dichotomies of gay liberation versus gay rights and homophobia versus heterosexism; the centrality of sexuality to any radical critique of U.S. society; the need for iron-clad confidentiality in HIV-antibody testing; the issue(s) of testing itself; the importance of investigating alternative proposed causes and treatments of AIDS. The staff does seem to have moved lesabian/gay and AIDS issues up a few notches on their progressive agenda since 1985. In that year, the *Guardian* published a pull-out supplement on “Building a Movement,” a supposedly exhaustive round-up of progressive activism that failed to include a single article on lesbian/gay *or* AIDS organizing.

We are encouraged that *Guardian* job listings now include explicit affirmative action for lesbians and gays. At present, however, there are no lesbian or gay staff members. Furthermore, we were told that chances are slim that the name of a lesbian or gay man will appear anytime soon on the paper’s editorial masthead, given the *Guardian*’s perpetual state of financial peril. Yet it seems clear that the same basic problems will persist around these issues until — at the barest minimum — one gay man or lesbian does join the editorial collective and has a say in basic policy decisions.

We see the June 2 meeting as a rare opening for genuine, if sometimes contentious, dialogue between gay and straight leftists.

At the same time we are aware of a tendency to shift responsibility for sustaining this fragile relationship back onto the few free-lance lesbian and gay writers who have struggled, often successfully, to develop a gay liberationist/radical AIDS activist perspective within the editorial limitations of the *Guardian*. This ploy, however, evades what is really at issue. The *Guardian* staff itself must deal fully with issues of sexuality and social control that have in the past been treated as peripheral to the left agenda. And it must re-examine its approach to how these issues affect people of color in particular. Only then can it forge real links with the lesbian/gay and AIDS communities.

We do find the *Guardian*’s willingness to examine these issues promising. We ask *GCN* readers to join us in holding them accountable to their pledges of better coverage and ongoing regular dialogue. We also encourage everyone to confront left and progressive media — newspapers, magazines, radio stations — in their own cities with similar demands. Indeed we hope that the process unleashed with the *Guardian* can set an example for all the left media to follow.

In solidarity,
Jim Kemp
Bob Lederer
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blacks presumed dead, stupid and unable to read

Dear *GCN*:

I am writing to protest Liz Galst’s dismissive reply [Vol. 15, No. 3] to Tracy Jackson’s letter in the previous issue. Jackson, a black woman, responded to what she felt were certain implications in Galst’s article on the Quilt. Rather than just letting Jackson speak her mind or even addressing the real and valid points that she raised, Galst insists that Jackson “misread” the piece, that she “missed the content” because she was so unreasonably “enraged.” At no point does Galst admit that her piece may have been badly written and unclear, that she may have been wrong or even that she is open to hearing another opinion. No. What we get as an answer is that this black women cannot read, and is too dumb to understand the article because her emotions got the better of her.

Looking back on Galst’s original piece it is clear that everything Jackson says is true; her critique touches on what Galst implies rather than what she says, but that, in my book, is fair game. Looking at Galst’s original piece again, I agree with Tracy Jackson. Galst’s piece is whiny and self-indulgent, but there is something there that Jackson doesn’t mention and didn’t see the first time. “I needed to grieve for my friend Cheryl,” Galst writes, “whom I presume has died since we last spoke.” Isn’t this just like a white person. “Whom I presume has died.” Think about that. Cheryl’s very life depends upon this white person’s presumptions. Black people have been presumed dead, or stupid, or unable to read, for hundreds of years by white people. Even those who mean well, whatever that means.

If Cheryl was a white woman I bet Galst would have found out if she was dead or not. If Tracy Jackson was a white woman I’m sure that Galst would not have been so quick to dismiss her ability to read. None of this is new. I am tired of being “presumed dead.” I am tired of being told that I “misread.” I am tired of being told that if I get enraged, “I miss content.”

None of this is new (again). This is why black people go hoarse from yelling at white people. This is why black people work in their own groups. This is why black people stop reading *GCN*.

Bonita Tramel
Dorchester, Mass.

Shallowness and silliness

Dear *GCN*:

Just wanted to write and tell you how much I appreciated the piece on the NAMES Project Quilt by Liz Galst [Vol. 15, No. 48]. I too have a hard time mourning men whose own sexual and lifestyle excesses brought them to where they are now. The notion of “Honey wasn’t it fabulous” to mourn a life points out the shallowness of both much of the gay male community and of the NAMES Project itself. Liz Galst’s attempt to mourn her friend in this setting was, for me, the truly moving aspect of her story. When the lives of women — women who are killed, battered and abused every-

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—Read Weaver
Utne Reader

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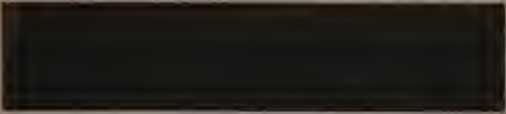
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day with no one to mourn them — are of so little matter to the world, the Quilt looks pretty silly indeed.

■ Jennifer Santini
Somerville, Mass.

Gay NY prisoner needs help, expects retaliation

Dear *GCN*:
I would like to bring to your attention the gravity of the harassment I and others have been experiencing. I've been placed in punitive isolation for engaging in sexual acts. It is no secret that I am homosexual, not that I am flamboyant, but I make no secret of it. My disciplinary report stated that I was in a bathroom stall with another inmate who had his penis exposed, which is true. However, at my hearing I stated that the other inmate was attempting to FORCE me into sex. Being that he was going home soon he admitted to trying to force me, but with both this confession and no evidence that I had violated any institutional rules, I was still found guilty, with a sentence of 2 months in isolation, 2 months of loss of commissary packages, home phone calls, and 3 months loss of good time [effectively, his prison sentence is extended 3 months].
After my sentencing I was taken to a cell and beaten by approximately five officers and left unconscious.

The hearing officer Captain Wilson told me he finds homosexuals disgusting and he has taken his personal feeling into his job and found me guilty for something that even my disciplinary ticket finds me innocent of. I'm living in fear of my life. I'm not the only homosexual inmate who gets harassed, but I'm the only one who is asking for help at this time. Please if you can offer any legal assistance at all or write letters of concern and protest, I truly need this.

For being young and speaking out I do expect retaliation and by being so far from home (NYC) I know for a fact that they will. I ask you to contact the facility [Warden, Collins Correctional Facility, Helmuth, NY 14079] and ask to be placed on my correspondence sheet. By them seeing that I have outside support I may leave here alive.
Please help,
Sterling Fleming
87B 1626
Helmuth, NY 14079

There to help all?

Dear *GCN*:
I receive the *GCN* regularly and can say that without it I'd be lost! But I can't believe how hypocritical the legal services advertised in it are. I speak from my own experience. Since I was first incarcerated I have tried to acquire much needed help from Lambda Legal, ACLU and the National Lawyers Guild. I was blatantly refused any assistance of these offices of any type. Kevin Beryl of NGLTF did attempt to at least offer directives of whom to write to, but they just shot me down again.
And to think these people put out the image of being there to help ALL of the gay brothers and sisters!
Ron Meola
180830 (1407)
Box 1100
Avon Park, FL 33825

Gerstell still on the ballot

Dear *GCN*:
It's interesting to see where Mike LoPresti took his campaign after he got me out of the way. In June and July, he suddenly became the great liberal: the better to swamp a low-budget liberal opponent from the subterranean gay community.
Having accomplished that, he's doing the old swing-'em-to-the-right routine. The latest piece of campaign literature from the LoPresti organization emphasizes increased penalties for criminals, and the picture on its face is a picture of LoPresti with three cops.
In my opinion, it is poverty that causes crime. The existence of a black and Hispanic underclass in our inner cities is a serious problem, but it will not be solved by putting them all in jail.
I'm still on the ballot folks. If LoPresti is a progressive, I'm a monkey's uncle.
Sincerely,
Maguerite (Mimi) Gerstell
Winthrop, Mass.



The fascination of the abomination: butt-fucking, politics and AIDS

By Scott Tucker

[*Ed.: GCN received a copy of this letter to The Nation. As part of our continuing efforts to explore homophobia on the left, we publish this letter, along with an introduction by Scott Tucker.*]

When Roy Cohn died of AIDS after a lifetime of infamous greed and political viciousness — including serving as legal counsel to Senator Joe McCarthy during a time of political and sexual witch-hunts and bullying — his biographers were assured a good market for their books. Two biographies of Cohn were reviewed by Robert Sherrill in the left-wing *Nation* magazine. Sherrill described Cohn as “a particularly nasty homosexual.” Whether Sherrill despises butt-fuckers more or less than right-wingers remains an open question. In any case, lesbian and gay radicals must take special care to challenge heterosexism on the left. We would also do well to defend the essential humanity or our political enemies, among whom Roy Cohn was once numbered.

To the Editors of *The Nation*:

“We are born,” wrote St. Augustine, “between piss and shit.” If Augustine was transfixed by the proximity of child-bearing and excretion, Robert Sherrill is subject to a more particular kind of “the fascination of the abomination.” Butt-fucking, for Sherrill, brands Roy Cohn as much as [his right-wing] politics. [Cohn was] “a particularly nasty homosexual,” in Sherrill’s words. (See Sherrill’s review of two biographies of Roy Cohn, “King Cohn,” in the May 21 issue of *The Nation* as well as his replies to critical readers, July 30.) Sherrill marvelously clarifies the relation between homosexuality and hastiness by conflating right-wing politics, butt-fucking and AIDS....

Looking at Sherrill, I honestly conclude he has an unexamined faith that AIDS is the Wrath of God. But whereas the old-fashioned God of Patrick Buchanan, Jesse Helms, and Jerry Falwell takes special aim at commie-pinko sodomites, Sherrill’s nameless deity believes in progress, and strikes down right-wing sodomites like Cohn.

The gloating manner in which Sherrill deals with disease and death — even if the dying man was Cohn — is infinitely more abominable than any sexual act Cohn ever performed: “To his death he denied he was homosexual, but the Dorian Gray scene of his dying of AIDS said it all.” Said it all? But surely not all IV drug-users, or hemophiliacs, or Africans, or Americans with AIDS are homosexual? Cohn, however, among his other AIDS-related symptoms bore the stigma of a “slit-like wound above (his) anus.” There — as if his public career were not enough — is the final and most damning evidence of Cohn’s depravity. Unmasked at last, another Dorian Gray in fatal decay. Cohn, it is true, never claimed a public identity as either a homosexual or as a gay man. Sherrill, unsurprisingly, prefers to call Cohn homosexual, a word most frequently used in a reductive and insulting way.

“I’ll just say,” wrote Sherrill, “that my review was of a book that went into great detail about Cohn’s dying, to good purpose, since there was something quite fitting in the putrescent ending of this very putrescent fellow.” What Sherrill regards as poetic justice, I regard as a “progressive” species of moral insanity. Would death from Tay-Sachs disease be specially fitting for right-wing Jews? Or would sickle-cell anemia be specially fitting for right-wing blacks? Is there, in fact, any justice at all in the distribution of diseases such as cancer and arthritis among people of all kinds?

But in Sherrill’s view, homosexuals must indeed be more deserving of disease, especially if their politics also signify perversion. In this respect, too, Sherrill resembles those moralists who segregate “innocent victims” of AIDS, such as hemophiliacs and unborn children, from the presumably guilty others. He resembles, too, those pundits and potentates who segregate queers, whores, junkies, and whole nations in

darkest Africa from “the general population.” Sherrill ought to appreciate the impeccable logic now adopted by politicians of both parties, as well as news reporters, whereby a black lesbian mother and union member belongs to several “special interest groups,” but the president of Chrysler belongs more purely to The People. The whole impulse behind Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition was to expose and oppose this dangerous nonsense. Sherrill’s heterosexism, on the contrary, reflects the kind of false and divisive “populism” current in both parties, and even on the left.

Only a wimp or worse would show any sympathy for a specimen like Roy Cohn, right? Sherrill is welcome to inspect my rear for any tell-tale signs of right-wing deviation, but in fact my lover and I have reasons as good, or better, than Sherrill’s to despise Cohn and his legacy. My lover comes from a left-wing Jewish family which took a seven-year leave of absence from these shores, due in no small part to McCarthyism. Roy Cohn’s self-hatred as a Jew and as a gay man was real, just as Sherrill claims. But though Cohn’s mother may have been overbearing, as Sherrill states, no one’s sexuality is neatly explained by the family circle; and Cohn’s sexuality was shaped in great measure by precisely the bigotry of heterosexuals such as Sherrill.

Heterosexism means, among other things, a refusal to grant equal parenting,

...I was dismayed to open The Nation and find the ignorance, the bigotry, and the truly reactionary mean-spiritedness of [Roy Cohn biography reviewer Robert] Sherrill. He has no moral authority to judge whether my politics, unlike Roy Cohn’s, will save me a place among “innocent victims” during a time of plague. He has no right to judge whether the end of my life — however it may come — or anyone else’s will be just and “fitting.”

adoptive and spousal rights to lesbian and gay people — as Dukakis refused to do in Massachusetts. When Dukakis claims the Democrats are “the party of families,” gay people know that our own invitation to that party is a grudging gesture. That kind of bigotry is based, in turn, on a refusal to acknowledge the psychic and sexual integrity of gay people. Sherrill’s reading of Cohn’s psyche and sexual life is, indeed, based on the premise of essential homosexual nastiness; and Sherrill does, indeed single out Cohn as a particularly nasty ease.

Had Roy Cohn been a progressive, had he died of syphilis in the days before antibiotics, and — most important — had he been heterosexual, then Sherrill might have winked at the man’s sexual appetite. But Roy Cohn was a promiscuous gay reactionary, and that combination is unforgivable. Sherrill takes a perverse pleasure in “exposing” Cohn’s ass-hole to the world, the pleasure of the He-Man putting down the She-Man, the pleasure of the scandal-monger with a juicy piece to share — in this case the anal lesion of a dying man. Where [should we] begin Sherrill’s sexual and moral education? Begin, of course, with ass-holes.

Ass-holes are sexual organs for many men and women of all sexual persuasions (and yes, Robert, there are more than two). Ass-holes deserve the same respect as pricks and cunts, even if we do swear by them all. Today, great curiosity and repulsion surround lesbian and gay sexuality. Dukakis and Jesse Helms feel Americans must be protected from graphic sex education materials which use common language — language like “butt-fucking,” rather than “anal inter-

course.” That last phrase is Greek to many of the young, the poor, and immigrants. Though Miss Manners and Congress won’t approve, common language (in translation when necessary) has proven far more effective in reaching and educating many people than more genteel materials — as participants at the Second International Lesbian & Gay Health Conference and AIDS Forum testified this month in Boston. But those who control public funds and services also seek to control public language, and in both cases they seek to avoid reality. Meanwhile, the death toll mounts.

As long as AIDS is regarded as the fitting end to the lives of folks who engage in non-monogamous, non-reproductive, and not strictly genital sex, then we will continue to find brutally expedient “solutions” to the deeper sexual and social crisis. We can, of course, simply declare that whole groups of people are expendable, as numerous right-wingers have already done. Sherrill, presumably more enlightened, might like to add right-wingers themselves to the dead weight.

When I first read Sherrill’s review of the Cohn biographies in *The Nation*, I registered my protest by phone with the literary editor, Elizabeth Pochoda, who suggested I put my own views in writing. Unfortunately, I was delayed by Philadelphia City Councilman Fran Rafferty, whose crusade of misinformation about AIDS and whose bullying tactics toward gay people had personal consequences. I was assaulted and beaten by two Rafferty loyalists who announced, “We’re for Rafferty and we’re for the majority!” The local Lesbian and Gay Task Force had issued a public report a week earlier, documenting a serious escalation in violence against gay people. One “justifying” motive in these attacks is certainly AIDS.

Two years ago I tested seropositive for the HIV virus. My lover of 13 years has not yet been tested. He continues teaching, I continue writing, and we both continue our personal and political lives. We don’t know what the future may be for us — or for the many millions who will be touched by AIDS in some way in years ahead. But for the present, I am still a lover and a fighter. Dealing day to day with other enemies, I was dismayed to open *The Nation* and find the ignorance, the bigotry, and the truly reactionary mean-spiritedness of Sherrill. He has no moral authority to judge whether my politics, unlike Roy Cohn’s, will save me a place among “innocent victims” during a time of plague. He has no right to judge whether the end of my life — however it may come — or anyone else’s will be just and “fitting.” Does he believe in some cosmic equivalent of capital punishment? Is he God to make such judgments?

From Sherrill’s dismissal of the other readers who challenged him, it is evident he believes he is bravely speaking the radical truth despite the aversion and evasion of weaker spirits. Such egotism! And such cowardice! It takes no courage to be a bigot, nor has he discovered a great moral truth by cheering at the fatal suffering even of an enemy. Will the editors of *The Nation* how have the decency not to censor my own protest, and will they clarify their own ethics and politics in publishing Sherrill’s views? No one is challenging Sherrill’s right to free speech! But now the editors must match his free speech with their own. What do you think, then, of this Robert Sherrill, this particularly nasty heterosexual?

Scott Tucker is a Philadelphia gay activist, artist and journalist. He was a Lavender Leftist and has written for The Body Politic, Christopher Street, The Native, The Advocate and GCN.

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Leonard Frey, 1939-1988: An appreciation

By Michael Bronski

NEW YORK — Leonard Frey, a stage and film actor best known for his portrayals of Harold in *The Boys in the Band* and Motel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, died of AIDS Aug. 24. He was 49 years old.

Frey, born in Brooklyn, was trained as a visual artist but switched careers at the age of 21 and made his acting debut as a cast replacement in the role of Yellow Feather in the musical *Little Mary Sunshine*. Two years later he won a Vernon Rice award for his performance in *The Coach With Six Insides*, Jean Erdman's adaptation of James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. In 1964 he was featured in Adrainne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro* and later that year landed a small role in the hit musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. His big break came in 1967, however, when he began in workshop productions of what was to become Mart Crowley's off-Broadway hit *Boys in the Band*, which premiered a year later.

In 1970 Frey recreated the role of Harold in the film version of *Boys in the Band*. For many straight audiences this was the first time they had ever seen, or had to deal with, gay male characters on the screen. And for many lesbians and gay men it was the first time they had characters with whom they might identify.

After filming *Boys in the Band* Frey went on to a major role in the film version of *Fiddler on the Roof* — for which he received an Oscar nomination. He then began a very productive career in repertory companies such as Lincoln Center in New York and the Yale Rep. He had leading roles in such plays as *Beggar on Horseback*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Time of Your Life*, Peter Nichols' *The National Health* and Athol Fugard's *People Are Living Here*. He also acted in several operas, including *Die Fladermaus*, in which he appeared with Joan Sutherland and Beverly Sills. He was active in television. One of his most famous roles was as the only pupil in the Ted Baxter's Broadcasting School episode of the *Mary Tyler Moore* show. His last appearance was on *Murder, She Wrote*.

It is difficult to describe the heady excitement of seeing the stage or the film version of *Boys in the Band*. It wasn't so much the shock of recognition at the piece's story and dialogue as it was the possibility that we were seeing homosexual *characters* played by homosexual actors. I remember going with a group of friends on the opening night of the New York release of the film and how we talked of nothing else for hours in a coffee house in the Village. The three men in the group — all of whom were gay — were upset by the movie. We were political types who had limited, if any, experience with older gay men and almost none with the "types" portrayed in the film. We were certain that our political analysis and leftist credentials put us beyond the realm of these "queens" who worried about the wrinkles, receding hairlines and vicuna sweaters. But we felt a lurking fear, and a deep seated attraction, to a lifestyle which was so visibly and openly gay identified. The women in the group commented mostly on how nice it was to see some of the men be physical with one another since most of the gay men they knew talked politics rather than sex; and in 1970, Newark was not the most receptive place for gay men to show affection public-

ly. But what intrigued all of us was which of the actors were really homosexual. After much discussion we decided they all were. In retrospect I realize we needed to believe that, because although we knew there were plenty of closeted Hollywood personalities, playing gay characters was the closest thing to coming out we had seen.

In reality some of the men who acted in the film were gay and some were straight. At that time they all implied in interviews that they were heterosexual and that playing a gay part in a gay play was a great stretch of their acting abilities. On the *Dick Cavett Show* Frey responded with a non-denial denial when queried by Cavett if people now assumed he was gay because of the movie. Frey laughed and said that he gagged so easily that he had trouble when the doctor put a tongue depressor in his mouth. I can remember watching the show with some friends and all of us feeling confused, somewhat angry, and disappointed. No one expected him to admit that he was homosexual, but somehow the illusion that he might be was shattered.

What I never thought of then, but do now as I write an obit for Leonard Frey, was that such situations must have been as confusing, possibly angry-making, to him as they were to me and my friends. It was important for my friends and me, living in a world with few identifiably gay people, to be able to point and label. Frey, and the other actors in the film, presented us the opportunity to do that.

A year or so after *Boys in the Band* was released I actually did get to meet Frey. It was only in passing, but important to me. A woman friend was working as a dresser backstage at Lincoln Center and Frey was appearing in *Beggar on Horseback*. I went backstage to visit her after the show and Frey, flushed and crazed from the final curtain call came rushing to his dressing room. My friend quickly introduced me and we both quickly left so that Frey could get out of costume. What most remains vivid in my mind is that from his joking and dishing backstage it was clear that Frey was gay.

It seems like such a small thing now, inconsequential, almost pathetic, but in 1971 my recognition of Frey's gayness was a revelation to be savored. At that time I did not have the luxury to decide which gay person I approved of. The characters in *Boys in the Band* seemed alien from my own experience, but there was something that drew me to them. You could call it a shared oppression, certainly back then it didn't seem much like a shared sensibility, but this empathy was certainly there.

My feelings have not changed all that much in 20 years. Although the gay liberation movement has made great, irrevocable impact on the prevailing culture, I find that in 1988 I still don't have the luxury to dismiss a gay person with whom I don't agree, or to whom I don't feel a great deal of connection. In some very frightening way AIDS has made me feel as vulnerable as I did almost 20 years ago. The shared oppression of 1971 is now made physically manifest with AIDS. But that link actually highlights the feeling of connectedness in that fleeting, seemingly almost inconsequential, meeting with Leonard Frey 17 years ago. □

AIDS, produced by WBZ-Channel 4 from 1985-86. The reportedly moving show offered glimpses of Cronan's anger and pain, as well as an account of his brave political struggle. □

Note: A cable documentary program produced last year, "Sex, AIDS and Paul Cronan" (A Hal Koltin Special), will be shown again on Sept. 5 at 8pm. on Boston Neighborhood Network-TV, channels 3 and 8. Koltin's interviewing style and apparent ignorance about AIDS leave a great deal to be desired; for example, he expresses shock that Cronan could have a full and "safe" sex life while living with AIDS and implies that Cronan's sexual habits may be to blame for his illness. Still, this may be worth seeing for the times Cronan does manage to get around Koltin and tell us a little about living with AIDS in his own words.

— Stephanie Poggi



Dykes hoe-down in *Waking Up, A Lesson in Love*

Lace and leather, Texas-style

New lesbian porn video premieres in Boston

Waking Up, A Lesson in Love. Directed by Greta Schiller. Produced by Linda Farin and Lindsey Lane. With Hannah Moore and April Gates. Boston showing to benefit **GCN** Sept. 17, Paine Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge. 7pm.

By Elizabeth Pincus

The sexiest thing about *Waking Up*, the new lesbian erotic video from Foosh Productions, has to do with the footwear. For several giddy minutes, a pair of women glide smoothly across a rustic dance floor, their turquoise high-tops and scuffed black cowboy boots flawlessly in synch. The camera wisely focuses on their fetching feet. In a later scene, a naked toe yearningly traces the stitching on another pair of tantalizing shit-kickers. Yee-haw!

If only the story line were as provocative. *Waking Up* concerns the exploits of Susan, a tangle-haired lovely from Austin, Texas, who leaps happily into a whirlwind of lesbian love-making. The hour-long video details her adventures, from the first time she is seduced by an impossibly wholesome gang of nature-worshipping women to her string of coy one-night stands. Finally, Susan is confounded by a traveling saleswoman, a slick mystery woman who echoes Susan's own motto of "Skip the entanglements, leave 'em wanting more."

The plot of *Waking Up* left me wanting more. Besides cliches falling limply out of characters' mouths, the dream sequences scattered throughout the video are disjointed and at times confusing. And the pull-up-your-bootstraps resolution is banal at best. Perhaps if the videomakers had had Susan working in a shoe store instead of a flower shop...

Nonetheless, *Waking Up* has its share of offbeat delights. Two extended scenes at Petticoat Junction, an Austin country-western dyke bar, offer endearing glimpses of the two-stepping life. Later in the video, one character sports a delicious snake bolo

tie and another a ten-gallon hat. In my favorite kitschy scene, three naked nymphs dive into a glen and perform some water ballet. Clearly, a lot of effort went into producing a video of originality, with gentle humor and touches of Texas flavor.

Waking Up has plenty of sex, much of it sensuous touching and teasing. Susan and her amores spend luxurious time stroking one another slowly, eyes locked and inviting. But as with the plot, there's a problem of believability with the sex scenes. When Susan finally beds down with the supposedly super-hot Claudia, I couldn't figure out why this encounter was so much more gratifying than any of the others. Still, with the dearth of woman-made porn out there in lesbiana, *Waking Up* could gratify some hungers, especially those of women with a lust for lace and leather, cowgirl style.

Waking Up was directed by Greta Schiller, who made the Emmy award-winning *Before Stonewall* and other documentaries about the lesbian and gay community. Her professional touch is evidenced in the visual polish of *Waking Up*, the first erotic video released by Foosh Productions. Founder Linda Farin — an Austin attorney with experience in film, video and business administration — said she started Foosh in an effort to step up the production and distribution of films, videos and other products for lesbians. Frustrated by the homophobia and sex-phobia Farin said she experienced while producing *Waking Up*, she dedicated the video to "ending the oppression of our sexuality as women and as lesbians."

Waking Up is indeed an affirmative dose of lesbian-centered erotica. The plot lacks muscle and the cast lacks diversity — it's an all-white Austin world that we see — but the video is strong on guts and good intentions. The videomakers say, "Y'all come enjoy!"

Waking Up is available in some video stores and from Foosh Flicks, P.O. Box 4493, Austin, TX 78765. □

Fisons

Continued from page 3

At the meeting, which was attended by state health officials and moderated by Stewart Landers of the Fenway Community Health Center, Fisons representatives agreed to reveal the names of investigators working with clinical trials. The company also expressed willingness to reconsider its automatic exclusion of IV drug users from trials. Several ACT UP/Boston demands were not met, however. The company would not yet agree to release information about dosages of AP used in trials, broaden its eligibility requirements for people seeking to participate, or commit to establishing a policy of giving charitable contributions.

Busby said "no progress whatsoever" was made on the issue of corporate gift-giving. He explained that since much of Fisons' profit comes directly from PWAs, ACT UP/Boston maintains the position that the company is morally bound to return a portion of that profit to the affected community.

But overall, members of ACT

UP/Boston told *GCN* they were extremely pleased with the outcome of the Aug. 16 discussion. James Parker, Fisons' vice president of research and development, also expressed satisfaction with the meeting and said people at his company were becoming increasingly educated about the AIDS crisis. ACT UP/Boston and Fisons agreed to continue negotiations at future meetings.

"We made a significant breakthrough in reaching out to corporations," Busby said, citing Fisons' willingness to discuss issues of ethics and corporate responsibility. He added that ACT UP/Boston has been in contact with AIDS activists in Chicago to suggest strategies for applying similar pressures on Lyphomed. Members of Chicago for AIDS Rights (C-FAR) have staged demonstrations at Lyphomed over the past year to protest the company's alleged profiteering.

For information about Fisons' clinical trials of aerosolized pentamidine, call Nigel J. Rulewski at (617) 275-1000. ACT UP/Boston may be reached at (617) 492-2887. □

Cronan

Continued from page 3

mained determined to continue working and set an example by fighting discrimination. Eventually, a company-sponsored AIDS education program was implemented at NET; Cronan remained employed through late 1987. Last year NET gave Boston's AIDS Action Committee (AAC) a \$30,000 grant and initiated the New England Consortium for AIDS Education, an educational resource for area businesses.

A NET spokesperson explained that Cronan's case was an impetus for the company's new AIDS education efforts, though he said NET would have begun programs anyway. But according to Casey, Cronan's battle was the key motivation behind NET's new AIDS programs. Cronan also contributed to public education by appearing in a television documentary about living with

The generous poetry of Luz Maria Umpierre and Chrystos

The defiant, inspirational words of two lesbians of color

The Margarita Poems

Luz Maria Umpierre-Herrera
Third Woman Press, Bloomington, Ind.,
1987
\$5.00 paper, 39pp.

Not Vanishing

Chrystos
Press Gang Publishers, Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada, 1988
\$9.50 paper, 105pp.

Reviewed by Ana Terri Ortiz

"Everything we write will be used against us or against those we love"
— Adrienne Rich

From Bainbridge Island off the Washington State Coast and from the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers University come the defiant/inspirational words of two lesbians of color crazy enough to reveal the conditions under which they carry out their struggles for survival, mad enough to reject a simple rendition of their identities and lives. *The Margarita Poems* by Luz Maria Umpierre and Chrystos's *Not Vanishing* capture the essence of the danger-filled existence of lesbians of color and the internally colonized peoples of which they form a part. These offerings deserve serious attention from gay/lesbian and feminist readers, but will not be easy to read and absorb: the truths shared by these women are painful and contradict the illusions with which we anesthetize ourselves and make life in the contemporary U.S. more palatable.

Primary among these truths is that the publication of these volumes constitutes a risk for the two poets. Luz Maria Umpierre is currently embroiled in a battle with Rutgers University which threatens her means of earning her livelihood, her access to students and resources, and her freedom of speech. When Luzma challenged the promotion of a white man she considered inadequately qualified to be chairman of her department — by filing a claim of discrimination on the bases of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and political viewpoint — the University countered by declaring her mentally unfit to teach. (At the time of this writing, prospects for a favorable out-of-court decision for Luzma look dismal. The university intends to wait her out and wear her out emotionally and financially.) In her preface, Luzma relates how the works of Audre Lorde and Cherrie Moraga gave her the courage to not omit poems touching upon her lesbian passions and other biographical data. She explains that she speaks out of urgency:

...I needed to say...that which I had not uttered, and which was being used as a tool in my oppression by others, murmured behind closed doors, brought up as an issue to deny me my rights by those enemies who read my poetry too well.

Chrystos, for her part, is a member of the Menominee tribe and a loony bin survivor in a country with a policy of "the message is hard, commit the messenger." In her introductory poem "Crazy Grandpa Whispers," she reiterates the ease with which a woman of color who refuses to die or be silent can be involuntarily confined:

Grandpa if I obey you they'll lock me up again
like they did you

fine line
between my instincts & their sanity laws...
The logic of a people who seek a harmonious relationship with creation is at odds with that of a civilization based on the exploitation of living beings. Through the distorted lens of the temporarily dominant civilization, Indian logic appears simplistic, crude and unviable. The assumption is that the Indianness is fading, soon to vanish:

...Doctor A told me being
Indian didn't matter Said I had Character
Psychosis
... I didn't tell her
the trouble was I wouldn't live
if I was a chronic undifferentiated
schizophrenic thing
(from "Doctor's Favorite Color")

Chrystos challenges readers to fully face "what the actual, material conditions of our lives are... Don't admire what you perceive as our stoicism or spirituality — work for our lives to continue in our own ways." She exposes the hypocrisy of progressive movements which ignore the domestic underclass, preferring instead to agonize over less accessible causes:

For every hungry belly you want to blame
on somebody else somewhere else
exotic or romantic
I can show you ten bellies here
empty as your words...
(from "White Girl Don't")

Other pieces, among them "Gay American Indians March On Washington D.C." and "Maybe We Shouldn't Meet If There Are No Third World Women Here," serve as reminders that the gay and lesbian movements has yet to address the disease of racism on the terms of those most affected by it. In the latter, Chrystos writes:

...Don't struggle
with the problem of racism like algebra...
Don't make the racist assumption that the
issue of racism
between us
is yours
at me...

For those who would dismiss Chrystos by labelling her just another "angry" or "justifiably hostile" or "emotional" colored woman, the task will be difficult: she sketches with precision the webs of conflicting relationships which she must negotiate and the troubled alliances she must maintain. We are witnesses to her tiring choices: How to react to a confrontation between a sexist and homophobic Chippewa and a racist and sexist gay white? ("Ya Don Wanna Eat Pussy") How to best mourn the brown brothers and sisters fallen to violence and AIDS? ("Herbert Joseph Jeans" and "Dance A Ghost") Can one come to terms with surrendering one's baby brother to heroin ("My Baby Brother") or with betrayal by one's childhood caretakers? Chrystos shares a haunting dirge to a Cherokee child beaten to death by his father ("For Eli"), and in "Bitter Teeth" her graveside reunion with the uncle who molested her:

...Praying for relief I've buried you
therapied you
talked you into blue streaks and scars cut
my arms my breasts
expelled a thousand seeds Wet clay to
your fist I
couldn't drink enough shoot up
enough spread my legs enough
hundreds of strangers & worse
to wipe you out...

Chrystos also effectively conveys the deep joy she has encountered on her path. In "Foolish," her garden rises to join her in celebration:

...We're beginning! First time arrives
with yellow smells
surprises These friends I planted rise
up to embrace me
All the people are buds...
Here come spiders lambs with round
bellies & long legs
Let's drink these red throats of song...

Lovers of romantic poetry won't be disappointed in this volume, either. Chrystos is at times tenderly seductive, as in "O Honeysuckle Woman":

won't you lay with me
our tongues flowering
open-throated...
O honey woman
won't you suckle me
Suckling
won't you let me
honey you.

In other pieces she is decisive and urgent:

...Take off your think about it clothes
Leave your answers in the closet...
Roll yourself wet
red salmon sepia mud



Chrystos

brown violet gold
Paint your mouth in petals
Stay.
(from "Close Your Eyes")

Lesbian passion is also a central theme of *The Margarita Poems*. This collection consists of an extraordinary sequence of nine poems. The poet describes them as "poems written in movement"; indeed, they reflect the labor migration and dual-language experiences of her people. The volume is in both English and Spanish, so monolingual readers will want at some point to seek a translation from a friend in order to gain a full appreciation of Luzma's work.

The thread joining the pieces together is the dialectic tension and drive towards fusion between alter egos "Margarita" and "Julia." In addition to being a common woman's name, Margarita has numerous other meanings, among them the name of an elegant danza, an intoxicating drink, and the common daisy. The word can further be broken down into two components, "mar" (sea) and "garita" (guardhouse), echoing the Puerto Rican experience of being surrounded both by a purifying sea and an imperialist presence. In this collection, Margarita also represents the lost beloved and that part of the poet's self awaiting rescue from silence and confusion. Julia is her passionate and uninhibited counterpart, but Julia is also Julia de Burgos, the fiery and romantic Puerto Rican poet who died broken and alcoholic on the streets of New York in 1953. The only successful resolution to this fragmentation is the transcendence of Margarita's captivity with the aid of Julia's untamed vision. Luzma invites the reader to participate in her magical journey towards liberation, advising that "...if you find her [Margarita] while pounding through these lines, the best that you can do is fall in love and call Julia forth."

In "Immanence," Luzma anticipates the assessment of her transformational process by the forces of the dominant culture, in a passage which neatly summarizes her current predicament:

I am crossing
the river, MAD,
afflicted by the rabies
for those who'll call me
sinful, insane and senseless,
a prostitute, a whore,
a lesbian, a dyke
because I'll fall,
I'll drop,
I'll catapult
my Self
into this frantic
excitement for your
SEX
my Margarita,
my yellow margarita,
my glorious daisy.

The poet declares herself a political prisoner and speaks through the persona of uncontrollable streetperson Julia, who disturbs her audience/oppressors with her persistent lust for Margarita. In "Ceremonia Secreta," the loss of the beloved torments the poet to the point of frustration and insomnia:

¿Dónde estás Margarita?
La mano se me adormece en las noches
mientras hurgo en mi vientre,
entre los labios para hallarte.
Y grito tu nombre
cuando me sube el oleaje,
la marea...

[Where are you Margarita?
My hand falls asleep at night
While I rub into my womb,
between my lips in order to find you.
And I howl your name
when within me rises the waves,
the tide...]

Relief finally arrives in the form of a witch's
Continued on page 14



Luzma Umpierre

The tough, ironic, painful voice of Latisha Prentiss

Bird-eyes grapples with the life of a 16-year old lesbian committed to a mental institution

Bird-eyes

Madelyn Arnold

The Seal Press, Seattle, 1988

\$8.95 paper, 201pp.

Reviewed by Duncan Mitchel

It's scary enough just reading, let alone reviewing, the work of someone you know, especially if diplomacy is not one of your strong points. So when Madelyn Arnold asked me to review her first novel, *Bird-eyes*, I was eager to see it but nervous. I've known Madelyn for 17 years but I'd never read any of her work before. It didn't help that the deal with Houghton Mifflin she'd once mentioned had evidently fallen through and a small press had published the work instead. Maybe it's just my bad experiences as a reviewer, but it seems to me that small gay and lesbian presses aren't what they once were. I've read too many books the last year or so that mainstream houses probably rejected not for gay content but for amateurish writing. Oh well, I thought, as I unwrapped the package from Seal Press, if I don't like it I can always ask my editor to give it to someone else.

I needn't have worried. *Bird-eyes* is good; rough, painful, but good. It's the story of Latisha Prentiss, who in 1964 at the age of sixteen is committed by her family to a state-run mental hospital for being a lesbian, a runaway, a prostitute (how else could a 16-year-old runaway in 1964 support herself?), and a junkie ("If you can't relax when you hustle, sex will hurt you — which is where jazz comes in"). In 1964 in Middle America these things spelled C-R-A-Z-Y (of course, they still do and parents still have the power to sweep their deviant children into institutions). But Latisha doesn't plan to stay at East Central hospital; with the help of a gay male patient named Bryan, she is planning to escape and return to her lover Tina, the woman who introduced her to prostitution and smack.

As the novel opens, a new patient arrives: Anna Robeson, a farm woman of 40 who became depressed after her husband died and was pressured by her children into committing herself as suicidal. Anna is deaf, but she is forbidden by the hospital staff to use sign language (it's "animal-like: something out of caveman-throwback stories"; again, things haven't changed that much; remember the student revolt last March at Gallaudet College for the deaf, whose administration was hostile to Sign). Latisha, wounded by the sight of Anna's naive directness, tries to teach her how to get along in East Central, and the two become friends. Despite the prohibition, Anna teaches Latisha some Sign, naming her Bird-eyes. Eventually their subversive disobedience is discovered by the staff, complicating Latisha's plans for escape.

But this is only one thread, though an important one, in a novel in which a lot is always going on. A mental hospital is a handy symbolic microcosm of society for novelists, and it encourages the creation of a Dickensian gallery of grotesque characters, among both the patients and the staff. So we have (among others) Vivian-who-never-talks, Weird Diane with her outbursts of almost random violence, Doctor Kim, "a Korean Mormon whose English was the kind you hear in kamikaze movies," and Nurse Wykowski with her grabby hands. They are the conventions of the fiction of madness, and they lend a paradoxical predictability to *Bird-eyes*. Arnold does this just to let you know that she knows what she's doing, however; it's as if she were saying, OK, here's the usual stuff — but now it's going to get weird.

East Central is no shelter from a violent world. *Bird-eyes* reminds you of the psychiatric fads of the '50s and '60s — aversion therapy, electro-convulsive therapy, lobotomies — asking bitterly, "Treatments come and treatments go; where do you bury the survivors?" Latisha is taken out of the

hospital, drugged, straitjacketed, to be "interviewed," i.e., put on a display at a downtown medical center seminar. But there's more. Bryan pimps Latisha to the male staff, she pimps herself to Wykowski. She attacked by a male patient:

And there's more laughter but now his attendants are yelling at him *easy Danny, easy — now don't hurt that girl* and we're all tangled up, he hardly can move and so he shoves;... My lip is bleeding: I shove as hard as I can and then it's his fist, my teeth explode and my head snaps back, cracking hard against the seat: instant nausea, I can hardly think; and suddenly they've got him up under the arms and they're standing on the seats on either side of us, twisting his arm — there they are, much too late as usual, his attendants.

Compared to which the streets don't look so bad:

We were just on the street and hungry, by ourselves, without a pimp (and you need a pimp, a man to crush other men, but he'll make you want to kill him). And what proves I'm no good is that sometimes I was happy on the street. Bad things happen, but none of it is personal. There's an uncertain feeling that's sometimes very nice... Sometimes things would get better as the day wore on; that never happened at home. Sometimes we'd have money — drive-in movies — southern-fried chicken and jazz, and Southern Comfort. Not too bad. I mean, there's still the fact that you had to hunt up the next trick when the money ran low, but what's perfect.

But what really lifts *Bird-eyes* safely out of the routine and puts it on a level with such books as Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* or Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* is Latisha's unforgettable voice. Tough, ironic, streetwise, walking a tightwire above an inferno of violence and the fear of madness, Latisha's baby-butch bravado never quite drowns out the loneliness and terror that keen insistently beneath. It is Madelyn Arnold's achievement to have put that voice onto paper in such a way that you always hear its full complexity. There is some resemblance to the style of Joanna Russ, who also excels at the meticulous delineation of horribly raveled inner states, but Madelyn's style, while no less cerebral, is more concrete somehow. When Latisha stands in the shower — her only refuge at East Central — you feel the water drumming on her skin; when she talks of her fear of going crazy, she draws you in so that you feel it too.

You can get so everything's exactly equal: people and walls and Vivian and Diane: the TV and the cement blocks and the way they fold the milk containers, and when everything is equal, what are you? That's when you sit and stare. You have to fight that actively, all that staring: and when you find yourself doing that you have to get up and move. You simply move. Just walk someplace and look back where you were — not far away — and remind yourself that you aren't there anywhere. So you are not equal to the way you were: that place is not yourself, and you're still free.

I don't want to dwell on the autobiographical element in *Bird-eyes*, but it's there, so it should be mentioned. Madelyn Arnold (which, incidentally, is a pseudonym) was herself committed by her parents to a state mental hospital as a teenager for being a lesbian. There are other parallels between Latisha and Arnold, but there are also differences — Madelyn told me, for instance, that she convinced the not-too-sophisticated staff that she was heterosexual by necking in public with a young man who had also been committed for being gay. Eventually they released her. Latisha, on the other hand, escapes. For me this indicates Madelyn's understanding that it's not enough, in writing a novel, just to elaborate on what happened to you or to someone else. The "true" ending would probably have tipped the story into black comedy; the ending of *Bird-eyes* shows Latisha taking her freedom, rather than its being given to

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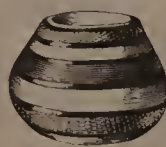
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Paul Monette's compelling accounts of his beloved's death from AIDS

"The story that endlessly eludes the decorum of the press is the death of a generation of gay men"

Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir

Paul Monette
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, NY, 1988.
\$18.95, cloth, 342pp.

Love Alone: Eighteen Elegies for Rog

Paul Monette
St. Martin's Press, NY, 1988.
\$13.95, cloth, 65pp.

Reviewed by John Kyper

After an unrelenting 19-month fight with AIDS, Los Angeles attorney Roger Horwitz succumbed to meningitis in October 1986. Writer and poet Paul Monette had been his beloved friend — a term he prefers to "lover" — for 12 years, having first met Roger at a Beacon Hill dinner party. The two eventually left Boston together for the West Coast in the late 1970s.

"There is no other reality but AIDS to me," writes Monette. "Since Roger's death I have been trying to leave a record for my people before AIDS takes me." These books are his account of the ordeal, and an overpowering exploration of his grief and anger.

Paul Monette has previously published several books of poetry and fiction, including his uproarious novel *Taking Care of Mrs. Carroll*. Since moving to Los Angeles he has worked in the film industry as a freelance screenwriter.

To call *Borrowed Time* a compelling, gripping book is a magnificent understatement, almost a cliché. Despite its length I had a hard time putting it aside. When I took it to my mother's for a weekend, I almost had to pry it out of her hands when I left, and I had to promise to get it back to her as soon as I was finished.

The story begins for us and for Paul and Roger with the slow dawning of the enormity of AIDS. (It did not even have a coherent name until a year after the initial, fragmentary reports had begun to surface in mid-1981.) At first it was easy to feel safe: Los Angeles lagged far behind New York's mounting caseload, and neither of the men was involved in the fast-lane lifestyle of drugs and heavy promiscuity that was then believed the prerequisite for affliction.

During that early period the trauma of being treated for an intestinal flu by the wrong medication led them to increased sexual caution:

Yet with caution as our watchword starting in February of '82, Roger was diagnosed with AIDS three years later. So the turning over of new leaves was not to be on everybody's side. A lot of us were ticking and didn't even know. The magic circle my generation is trying to stay within the borders of is only as real as the random past. Perhaps the young can live in the magic circle, but only if those who are ticking will tell our story. Otherwise it goes on being *us* and *them* forever, built like a wall higher and higher, till you no longer think to wonder if you are walling it out or in.

For a long time their meager knowledge of AIDS consisted of shadowy rumors and scattered dispatches. In the summer of 1983 their best friend Cesar was diagnosed. "It's not till you first hear it attached to someone you love that you realize how little you know about it," Monette writes.

At first you are equipped with a hundred different amulets to keep it far away. Then someone you know goes into the hospital, and suddenly you are at high noon in full battle gear. They have neglected to tell you that you will be issued no weapons of any sort.

Foreshadowing the tragedy that was to invade their own relationship, Cesar fought

for over two years before he died, never becoming bitter or losing his expansive, voluble spirit.

Step by step the horror started to unfold: After gradually worsening symptoms and fevers, a persistent cough and lost weight, Roger went to the Univ. of Calif./Los Angeles (UCLA) Medical Center for tests. His doctor was puzzled. Helpless, Paul oscillated between panic and denial, desperately seeking assurance from everyone he knew that this was only "regular" pneumonia. But a bronchoscopy revealed pneumocystis and an overnight stay stretched out to two weeks as Roger battled the infection.

So began what Monette calls their "life on the moon." Desperate to save his friend, he relentlessly pursued every piece of information he could find, again and again coming up against the government's apathy and benign neglect. From Tijuana he smuggled pharmaceuticals that the Food and Drug Administration had not seen fit to test or approve. Admittedly privileged and well connected, they were able to get Roger into two experimental drug programs at UCLA, where he became the first person west of the Mississippi to receive AZT. Monette credits the drugs with giving them their extra "borrowed time" together, which they lived to the fullest.

At the beginning they did not reveal the diagnosis to families or friends, save to those who were already immersed in the same struggle. They had had to work with their families to get them to accept the relationship, and of course had heard the horror stories of persons with AIDS being abandoned. Roger's half brother Sheldon discouraged them from burdening their elderly parents with the news. Once they knew, however, the families proved among their greatest sources of support. Roger continued his law practice for as long as he could, losing one client after the news got out.

Sheldon Anderson — his last name is not used in the book — emerges as a problematic figure: preeminent member of Los Angeles' gay elite, lawyer, real estate magnate, bank chairman, member of the University of California Board of Regents, and owner of a gay bar and bathhouse. Here he appears in an unflattering light, manipulative and loathe to face the unpleasant realities of the disease that would later claim him among its victims. Once again the community's "leadership" was preempted by its own troops in the face of the crisis.

Anderson died as *Borrowed Time* was awaiting publication. It is not hard to deduce from the text that his was the political connection that got Roger into experimental therapy. Yet he did not want his full name listed, Monette told me in an interview, for that one invaluable and unambiguous contribution.

The dust jacket of *Borrowed Time* pictures a sculpture of a Grecian warrior holding his fallen comrade. Many such images reverberate throughout the book, as well as through *Love Alone*, which comprises a complementary expression of the same tragedy. Monette explains in the preface to his poetry:

These elegies were written during the five months after he died, one right after the other, with hardly a half day's pause between. Writing them quite literally kept me alive, for the only time I wasn't wailing and trembling was when I was hammering at these poems. I have let them stand as raw as they came.

Sentences follow one after another in rapid-fire succession, with no punctuation or breaks. "I don't mean them to be impregnable," he writes, "though I admit I want them to allow no escape, like a hospital room, or indeed a mortal illness." Thus in "The Worrying" he communicates his

desperate mania to clean away anything that could cause infection:

3 A.M. I'd go around the house with a rag of ammonia wiping wiping crazed as a housewife on
Let's Make a Deal
the deal being PLEASE DON'T MAKE HIM SICK AGAIN faucets doorknobs the phone every lethal thing a person grips and leaves his prints on scrubbed my hands till the fingers cracked washed apples ten times ten ...

Although he recounts the same experience in virtually the same words in *Borrowed Time*, here the emotional intensity conveyed by the unorthodox form makes his imagery more compelling, and more memorable.

In "Manifesto" he transcends the confines of linear prose with his searing assessment of "empowerment" groupies preaching that people bring their illnesses upon themselves; Monette offers instead a call to arms:

we need the living alive to bucket Ronnie's house

'Radical America' offers new visions for the struggles against AIDS

The left journal's second AIDS issue comes out

Facing AIDS, A Special Issue

Radical America, Vol. 20, No. 6 (issued Sept. '87)
\$3.95 paper, 88pp.

AIDS: Communities Respond

Radical America, Vol. 21, Nos. 2-3 (issued May. '88)
\$4.95 paper, 79pp.

Reviewed by Marc Stein

In a culture that uses illness as a metaphor for social problems, it is tempting to describe the U.S. left's inadequate response to AIDS in medical terms. We might say, for example, that much of the U.S. left has been suffering from "deficient immunities" to emotional callousness and intellectual colonization by the right.

In what appears to be a promising "experimental treatment" for these "opportunistic infections," *Radical America* has produced two issues focused on AIDS. (See Charley Shively's review in *GCN*, Dec. 27, 1987 for additional comments on the first issue.) For emotional callousness, we are given a healthy dose of moving personal stories of living and dying with AIDS. For intellectual colonization (by which I mean the right's successful transmission of its race, sex and class ideology to the left), we are provided with medicine for deconstructing dominant conceptions of the epidemic. And to prove the possibility of achieving a holistically healthy leftist politics, we are given visions for a community-based lesbian and gay liberation movement organized around the struggle against AIDS.

But, as we should know from Susan Sontag, illness should not be used as a metaphor for social problems, partly because the facts of illnesses like AIDS are too horrible to use as analogy, and partly because the nature of social problems do not fit neatly into models of "disease" and "medicine." The problem with the left on AIDS is a social problem called homophobia or heterosexism. The problem is all the more noteworthy because it is from the left that we should expect a compassionate and compelling response to AIDS. (For analyses of homophobia, AIDS and the left, see Stephanie Poggi's article, "In These Homophobic Times," *GCN*, July 12, 1987, and in this issue, Jim Kemp's letter about *The Guardian* and Scott Tucker's Speaking Out on *The Nation*.)

RA's own success in tackling homophobia and AIDS owes much (they admit) to their own "lesbian faction" and the gay male writers they have published. (It is worth noting that while *RA* does acknowledge that there currently are no gay men on their editorial board, they fail to ex-

with abattoirs of blood hand in hand lesions across America need to trainwreck the whole show till someone listens so no they may not coo in mirrors disbarring the fevered the choked and wasting as losers who have not learned like Adam the yoga with which to kiss their own asshole every tent revival mantra is one less bomb tossed in red-taped labs of the FDA one less bureaucrat pelted as he chews his Pilate's thumb toddling home by limo to Silver Springs where all high-risk behavior is curfewed after dusk...

"The story that endlessly eludes the decorum of the press is the death of a generation of gay men," he writes in the Preface. The power of Paul Monette's writing is his scrupulous honesty in recognizing and expressing this grief, and in showing us that the healthy, righteous anger that comes from it has found the first step to healing. □

plore whether or not the lack of gay men contributed to the lateness of their own first issue on AIDS.)

Both *RA* issues, "Facing AIDS: A Special Issue," and "AIDS: Communities Respond" open with a ringing declaration of the mounting death toll. July 20, 1987: 38,808 diagnosed U.S. cases, 22,328 dead. May 1988: 17,000 more cases and 6,000 more deaths. We are meant to stagger under the enormous weight of the tens of thousands who have died. "...[T]o keep in focus their human face has become a political task," *RA* tells us.

The human faces we see in the first issue are those of two lovers of people with AIDS (PWAs). In Joseph Interrante's "To Have Without Holding: Memories of Life With a Person With AIDS," the former *RA* editor tells of his lover Paul DiAngelo's illness and death in 1983. Interrante describes the "rhythms and routines, the carving out of a time for us alone," and both men's experiences of dependence and self-reliance. He explains his focus on the personal as part of the efforts of gay men to "negotiate the immediacy of mortality within everyday life." Ron Schreiber's poems also explore two lovers' experiences of illness, strength and death. The irony of focussing on the mundane details of everyday life is striking in the midst of a struggle for survival. As we laugh at lines like: "He's been crosspollinating flowers since he was five," we cry at the cycles of sickness and the painful details of nausea, forgetfulness. Near the end, John is taken by his family to die at home, and his scream "Ron! Ron!" echoes the agonies of separation.

Walta Borawski's poem in the second *RA* issue gives us the gossip-like chatter about death that characterizes the lives of men whose friends and partners, past and present, are dying. Borawski makes us want to both laugh and scream when we are told that no one will wear leather at Jim's funeral, as the rituals of decorum and resistance struggle with one another. We lose the chronology of the deaths of so many friends, and we sense the magnitude of loss when the poet moves so abruptly backwards and forwards in time.

While most of the articles in both issues provide deeply personal perspectives (and I wish all did), we see most clearly the relationship between personal experience and politicization in Patrick Grace's "Living with AIDS" in the most recent issue. Living with AIDS in Provincetown, Mass., Grace tells of feeling powerless, and of being at the mercy of a virus, hospitals, the Catholic Church and the state. He thanks his audience for restoring his power: "We are teaching this country compassion, we are

Continued on page 12

Closeted passions of the mighty

A monumental biography of J. Edgar Hoover

The Boss: J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition

Athan G. Theoharis and John Stuart Cox
Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1988.

\$27.95, cloth, 489pp.

Reviewed by John Kyper

In 1961 pioneering gay activist Franklin Kameny founded the Mattachine Society of Washington to fight for the rights of federal employees who were being victimized by the government's snooping into their private lives. He had earlier lost his job as an Army astronomer after one such investigation, never permitted to examine the evidence that had secretly been collected against him — and had appealed his case unsuccessfully all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Typical of his confrontive approach, he scandalized many members of what was then known as the homophile movement by advocating the novel idea that homosexuality was *not* a sickness. He also regularly sent Mattachine's newsletter to J. Edgar Hoover. An agent called to inform him that the FBI chief took "a grave view" of the matter, and ordered his name be deleted from their mailing list. According to the 1972 history *The Gay Crusaders* (by Kay Tobin, Randy Wicker) Kameny retorted that he would remove Hoover's name only if the Justice Department would guarantee in writing that the FBI kept no file on the group.

Not surprisingly, he received no reply, and Hoover remained on the list. Uppity gays in the 1960s were refusing to cower to

his displeasure. In the meantime countless civil libertarians were coming to the same conclusion, that the Bureau and its Director could no longer be sacrosanct. By the close of that decade he had become such an object of controversy and even ridicule — though with scarcely diminished power — that one group of Vietnam anti-war activists that raided a draft board and destroyed the files named themselves "The Hoover Vacuum Conspiracy."

Athan G. Theoharis is a Professor of History at Marquette University who was an advisor to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities from 1975-76, and a consultant to the National Archives' FBI Records Appraisal Project in 1980. John Stuart Cox is a New York-based freelance writer. Together they have written a fascinating, frightening biography of a man who used his high position to systematically subvert U.S. democracy, manipulating and spying on presidents, legislators and private citizens alike.

For nearly half a century John Edgar Hoover reigned as one of the most powerful individuals ever to head a federal agency, shaping it to mimic his own repressed, compulsive personality. An embattled veteran of the 1919 "Palmer Raids" against aliens and suspected "Reds," he was named five years later acting Director of the Justice Department's scandal-plagued Bureau of Investigation by President Calvin Coolidge. He demonstrated his competence and soon ensconced himself as full Director, weathering the succession of administrations until his death in 1972.

The "Communist menace" was Hoover's lifelong obsession, bringing out his most

vitriolic passions. Roosevelt's death and the advent of the Cold War provided the propitious moment for him to embark on his crusade. To President Truman he misrepresented his predecessor's World War II security directives, to allow FBI surveillance of legal protest activities during peacetime. Carefully orchestrated exposes of Soviet spies, real and alleged, helped to stir public hysteria. Hoover's inflammatory pronouncements equating dissent with subversion did the most to set the stage for the imposition of blacklists, loyalty oaths and other manifestations of the witch-hunt mentality in the years to come.

Authors Theoharis and Cox maintain that "Hooverism" would be a more accurate moniker for that period than "McCarthyism," since the late Wisconsin Senator did not get into the act until several years later. The book discloses that, despite his repeated denials, the Director would feed McCarthy tips he could not publicize himself because they would have revealed that the FBI had broken the law in collecting the information — just as he had previously used the young Richard Nixon when the latter was a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Nixon was to prove a far more trustworthy disciple than McCarthy, who was cut off when his reckless accusations became counterproductive and an embarrassment.

Like Truman, President Eisenhower let himself be manipulated into delegating even more authority to the Director. In 1956 Hoover briefed the National Security Council on his program to "infiltrate, penetrate, disorganize and disrupt" the U.S. Communist Party. Neither the chief executive nor Attorney General Herbert Brownell expressed any opposition when he reported that the agency was employing such illegal methods as break-ins, bugs, mail opening and wiretaps. Instead, it was clear they preferred not to know what he was doing.

Emboldened, he decided to act on his own, secretly initiating COINTELPRO to "harass, disrupt and discredit" the Party. (Ironically, the Party's very existence was by now subsidized by the FBI, whose agents comprised a large portion of the dues-

paying membership.) In 1961 this counterintelligence program was extended to the Socialist Worker's Party, and later to the civil rights and anti-war movements, before it was finally dismantled after his death.

"Under these COINTELPROs," write the authors, "agents were authorized to use subterfuge, plant agents provocateurs, leak derogatory information to the press, and employ other disruptive tactics to destabilize the operations of the targeted groups." The most notable recipient of this undesired attention was Martin Luther King, who became the object of a relentless vendetta focusing on his reputed sexual prowess. And for the Black Panthers COINTELPRO led to the police assassination of many of their leaders.

The Kennedy Administration marked the first serious challenge to Hoover's hegemony in nearly three decades. But the Director's extensive private file on John Kennedy, detailing his voracious womanizing and associations with organized crime figures, dissuaded the President from moving to replace him quickly.

Kennedy's assassination and the succession of Lyndon Johnson provided a reprieve. He had helped protect Johnson against the consequences of some of his unsavory associates, including Billy Sol Estes and Bobby Baker, and supplied him with intelligence about his political enemies. The latter service was to become especially useful when a massive protest movement developed after Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War.

The new President was effectively blackmailed into waiving Hoover's retirement at age 70, even as the Director was creating an uproar by savaging Martin Luther King as "the most notorious liar in the country," for daring to assail the FBI's disinclination to investigate civil rights violations. But from then on Hoover was to be the butt of mounting criticism and demands for his replacement, controversy that his vindictiveness could no longer contain.

The marriage of convenience with Johnson was succeeded by even closer collaboration with President Nixon, a liaison

Continued on page 14



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BOOK SUPPLEMENT

An organizer, a feminist and a Jew

Rose Pesotta chronicles her work with the Int'l Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

Bread Upon The Waters

Rose Pesotta

ILR Press, Ithaca, NY, 1987

\$9.95 paper, 435pp.

Reviewed by Liz Galst

Rose Pesotta was an incredibly successful organizer for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) during its heyday. She was an anarchist, a feminist, a Jew, so I thought we had things in common. I came to her book, *Bread Upon The Waters*, because I have my own questions about what it means to be all these things, and I thought perhaps she could help me out. I wanted to know about her inner life and her work in the world and whether they complemented each other, whether it is possible to give your life for the cause and still be happy and/or well-adjusted.

Unfortunately, Pesotta doesn't write about those things, just as she doesn't dish the important dirt on being a woman in the male-dominated trade union movement, a Jew in a *goyishe* world, and an anarchist in the face of capitalism. But that doesn't mean this book isn't worth reading, because it is. Pesotta writes in a beautiful prose, telling wonderful tales of labor organizing during the 30's and 40's, and offering valuable lessons to anyone trying to build coalitions today.

Pesotta's book begins as she flies cross-country from New York to Los Angeles to begin an ILGWU campaign in the notoriously anti-labor city. But Pesotta's story begins long before that. She was raised by politically progressive Jewish parents in the Ukrainian *shtetl* Derazhniain in the era immediately preceding the Russian Revolution. Yet, she foresaw in Russia "no future for myself except to marry some young man returned from his four years of military service and be a housewife. That is not enough...."

Instead the U.S., the "Golden Land," became the home of her anarchist dreams. In 1913 she persuaded her parents to let her join her sister Esther in New York, where Esther worked in a shirtwaist factory and was active with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. While Pesotta escaped her match back in the old country, economic necessity married her and millions of other women, to a sweatshop sewing machine. At a time when other anarchists were off offing presidents and robber barons, publishing magazines, and organizing utopian communities, Pesotta threw her lot in with the Labor Movement. After all, is not the general strike the anarchists' greatest tool?

Following her sister's lead, Rose Pesotta joined up with Local 25 of the ILGWU. With Juliet Stuart Poyntz, Pesotta founded the first workers' education program in the country. One of Pesotta's greatest strengths as an organizer was her sensitivity to the aspirations of her sister workers and her ability to recognize the important role unions play in creating and sustaining working class culture. The entirely male leadership of the ILGWU picked up on her talent and in 1933 offered her a position as an organizer.

For the next 14 years, Pesotta was involved in a series of landmark unionizing campaigns. Some of her success can be attributed to the newly recognized right of workers to organize and bargain collectively under the Roosevelt administration's National Industrial Recovery Act and National Recovery Administration. But Pesotta's success can not be attributed to these legal protections alone. Like the other great organizers of her time, Pesotta possessed an ability to bridge the barriers of race, ethnicity and immigrant status which had divided and still divide the trade union movement. As one of the few women organizers of her time, she shared an instant rapport with women garment workers (who made up 85 percent of the ILGWU's membership). She cultivated leadership among the women she organized (yes, it's an odd concept for an anarchist to be

cultivating leadership...), and had an impeccable sense of timing in directing political energy.

And in the middle years of her career, she played an important role in the Goodyear Tire & Rubber strike — a strike instrumental in the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (then the "Committee for Industrial Organization"). Pesotta also participated in the Flint, Michigan sit-down strikes (1937) which led to the organization of the United Auto Workers. Opposition to her efforts came from within



Rose Pesotta

the Labor Movement itself; she was physically attacked by American Federation of Labor organizers for "invading their turf." And despite the constant aggravation caused by capitalists and communists (she hated communists almost as much as she hated capitalists. In her book, communists were divisive and blindly followed a stupid central party leadership), 18-hour days, and no place to call home, she persisted. With her own movie camera, she became one of the first organizers to document the U.S. labor movement on film.

And then there was what can only be described as her passionate appreciation of food. "Nourishing food is vital to the success of any strike," she wrote. Her chapters are filled with Hungarian pastries, Scandinavian delicacies, Puerto Rican plantains, and coffee — everywhere there is coffee. There are wonderful anecdotes about union offices turned, for an afternoon, into dance halls, and ILGWU outings to Catalina Island.

All of this I loved to read. Pesotta's prose is riveting and constantly fresh. But there is much missing here. In her introduction to this work, Ann Schofield, a women's labor historian, describes Pesotta as a desperately lonely and unhappy woman. For all her talk of "Free Love" her affairs with her male comrades (none of which are documented in the book) were often dramatic and unsatisfactory. The sexism of the trade union movement, according to Schofield, appalled and disappointed her. After 14 years as an organizer and 10 years as the only female member of the ILGWU's General Executive Board, she returned to her trade, dressmaking, and there's not a word in this book about why.

It's not just that I like to gossip, that I was looking for some kind of high-drama leftist trash that would help me work out my life-issues and keep me glued to my seat at the same time. I looked to Pesotta to tell the whole truth about her experience as an anarchist, a feminist, a Jew, and an organizer, because it is not just from her struggles against industrial capitalism that we can learn. Knowing how Pesotta integrated her work, her ideology, and her life would have been a valuable lesson to us all.

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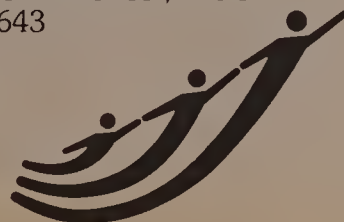
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A poet in exile

It's Me, Eddie: a fictional memoir
Edward Limonov
Translated from the Russian by S.L. Campbell
Evergreen/Grove Press, NY, 1987
(originally published in 1983)
\$7.95 paper, 264pp.

Reviewed by Duncan Mitchel
Ever since I took three semesters of Russian a few years back, I've thought how interesting it would be to be a Russian poet — to have that dense, lovely, flexible language to play with. The change from English would be like switching from carpentry to metal-working.

On the other hand, I doubt I could ever immerse myself in another language deeply enough to write good prose in it, let alone poetry. So Edward Limonov's novel/memoir of the years he spent in New York City gave me a powerful image for the experience of exile: Limonov could still write poetry — but only in Russian and therefore only for the emigre publishers, who didn't like him much more than Soviet officialdom had. He had lost his country, but being an incorrigible malcontent and nonconformist he had never really been at home there anyhow; he could be alienated as easily in the U.S. as in the USSR. Much worse, he had thrown away his art, his vocation, almost literally his life's breath. Poetry rarely translates well, and the same goes for poets.

Fortunately, Limonov found another art. *It's Me, Eddie* describes a slow, surly spiral through the Russian emigre community of New York City, as Eddie struggles to rebuild his life. Living on welfare in the Hotel Winslow, in anguish because his beloved wife Elena has unceremoniously dumped him, Eddie decides that what he needs is someone to love *him*, preferably an older man with money. Like everything else he tries, from busing tables in the Old Bourbon Steakhouse to fomenting revolution with the Workers Party, this doesn't pan out, but his adventures with men are disturbing and sexy. A reviewer in the *Wall Street Journal* rightly compared this book to Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*: it's not just one troublemaker's memoirs, but a work of art about art, alienation and love. □

Escapist fiction of the cheapest sort

Blue Heaven
Joe Keenan
Penguin Books, New York, NY, 1988
\$7.95 paper, 279 pp.

Reviewed by Walta Borawski
Writing comedy is difficult, and those who cannot do it often substitute cheap pokes. In this first and hopefully last Keenan work, two money-obsessed gay white men in their twenties want to be wealthy without working. (You're splitting your side already, right?) The more obnoxious of the two, Gilbert, decides to marry Moira Finch, in order to get expensive wedding presents. "That *cunt*?" says his friend Philip. "Do you expect me to believe for one instant you really intend to *marry* that crazy bitch?" One would have to go back to Ernest Hemingway's Nick Adams stories to find an equally virulent hatred of women.

But wait, there's more fun stuff. Gilbert's mother Maddie has a current husband named Tony, a member of a large Italian family that is, of course, ruthless Mafiosa. It is led by Frederick Bombelli, also known as Freddy the Pooch, because his enemies invariably wind up as dog food. And naturally, Gilbert *Selwyn* loves to tell

Philip *Cavanaugh* (they were lovers at boarding school) all about his stepfather's family:

And by this point there were half a dozen fat old widows—they looked like bison!—standing there cheering for Tony and Italy and their hardworking dead husbands, and when he finished they applauded! Oh, Philip, it was *awful*.

Also truly awful is the fact that the reader must accompany Gilbert and Philip in taxis to in-spots like "Marilyn's Grave," where naked men and women covered in plaster serve as "ornaments" for the clientele, who revel in the fact that beers are six bucks each.

But Keenan is wrong-headed in his omissions as well as his descriptions. He sets his book in "contemporary New York," and surely it must be contemporary, as its characters don't bat a false eyelash at paying \$22 for a plate of pasta—and yet there is no mention of AIDS. They go to a catered affair and Gilbert admits to having slept with three of the ten waitpersons, but there is never any mention of safer sex, or fear of death by any cause other than murder. Do people in comedies get to live in a different game with different sets of rules? Or is it that this is escapist fiction of the cheapest sort, intended for readers who just can't be bothered with issues more frightening than the thought of Gilbert in his Brooks Brothers suits?

If you want to know, Gilbert and Moira do marry, in church, after many shenanigans during which Gilbert and Philip repeatedly pass as heterosexuals. During the blood bath at the wedding reception 19 persons are killed and one—Freddy Bombelli—dies of a heart attack on finding out that his own fiance is a man. But never fear—all 20 corpses are those of Italians, and therefore the obligatory happy ending is intact.

Perhaps Keenan's shortcomings lie at root in his attraction to a genre that has (with few exceptions; Oscar Wilde, for one) long been the stronghold of apolitical-to-conservative white men: Saki, E.F. Benson, P.G. Wodehouse. These men have always found status quo charming, and presented their readers with characters who took privilege so much for granted they could toss some to their servants—every other Thursday evening. A comedy about people living off their wits in contemporary New York could happen; but it is *not Blue Heaven*.

Radical America

Continued from page 9

teaching this country that citizens take care of one another and as painful as the work is, as the burials increase, we continue the work."

Along with teaching care and compassion, an effective social response to AIDS depends on loosening the stranglehold of popular conceptions of the epidemic. *RA* explains in its first issue that it seeks to

challenge the framework of innocence vs. guilt, to declare the bankruptcy of testing as a substitute for public education, to refuse the panacea of merely more dollars, and to rebut the attacks on promiscuity.

Challenging the notion of risk groups, *RA* carefully walks their fine (and indeed it is fine) line:

We want to challenge the notion that AIDS is acquired by being a particular kind of person, while simultaneously challenging the current mythology that "everyone is equally at risk" since it denies the special vulnerability and experience of gay men, blacks and Hispanics, i.v. drug users, and other groups...

The articles in the first issue focus on the contradictions between health and profit ("Insuring Profits from AIDS: The Economics of an Epidemic," by Mark McGrath and Bob Sutcliffe); the relationships between race, sex, and AIDS ("Race, Sex, AIDS: The Construction of 'Other,'" by Evelyn Hammonds; and "Testing the Black Community," by Richard Goldstein); the role of the medical model in the construction of risk groups ("The Making of a Medical Model for AIDS," by Deb Whipple); the demographics of AIDS among Latinas and their particular educational needs ("Latina women and AIDS," by Dooley Worth and Ruth Rodriguez); the histories of and tensions between strategies of safe sex education and HIV testing ("Resistance and the Erotic: Reclaiming

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BOOK SUPPLEMENT

Radical America

Continued from page 12

History, Setting Strategy as We Face AIDS," by Cindy Patton); and Britain's AIDS-related media and educational failures ("Visual AIDS: Advertising Ignorance," by Simon Watney).

One article in the second issue continues the effort to untangle AIDS from the knot of public discourse. With a hodge-podge of provocative questions, Margaret Cerullo and Evelyn Hammonds's "AIDS and Africa: The Western Imagination and the Dark Continent" seeks to encourage Africanists to begin taking up questions about Africa and AIDS. Their questions touch on the racist association of disease with "exotic" sexual practices, the lack of adequate data about the extent of HIV infection in various parts of Africa and challenge assumptions ranging from the origins of AIDS in Africa to the prevalence of heterosexual anal intercourse as a form of birth control.

But the main body of the second issue seeks to create an alternative vision for the lesbian/gay community as we struggle against AIDS. While *RA*'s introduction to the second issue fails to integrate the ideas raised in the articles as successfully as in their introduction to the first issue, the articles themselves succeed admirably. Three focus on community politics and two on goal- and strategy-setting for the future.

"Multi-cultural Concerns and AIDS Action: Creating an Alternative Voice" is an interview with Paula Johnson, Jose Pares and Doralba Munoz, members of the Boston-based AIDS Action Committee's (AAC) Multi-cultural Concerns Committee. They describe their motivations for working on AIDS, which are rooted in coming out experiences, political work in the women's movement and communities of color and personal relationships with PWAs. While choosing to work within the white-dominated AAC for important reasons, they describe experiences of "cultural misunderstandings" between white people and people of color over such issues as voluntarism, gay identity and testing. Within their own communities, they decry the "level of denial" and the lack of leadership and commitment in some cases, and the use of AIDS by some leaders to advance their own moral agendas. But they also challenge the myth that communities of color are generally resistant to AIDS-related information.

Leadership is also the topic of Kevin Cathcart's "Soon to be a Made for TV Movie: Randy Shilts, and The Band Played On," which criticizes the straight world's selection of Shilts as a spokesperson for the gay community. Cathcart praises Shilts' condemnation of the U.S. governmental response to AIDS, but rightly attacks Shilts' misrepresentation of the gay community's response to the epidemic. In particular, he lambastes Shilts for refusing to acknowledge the importance of integrating a progressive approach to homophobia with an effective response to AIDS, and for accepting the false dichotomy between civil rights and public health. And Shilts overlooks the crucial role of the gay community in safe sex education and AIDS organizing.

Robert Padgug takes up the issue of the gay community response to AIDS in "More Than the Story of a Virus: Gay History, Gay Communities and AIDS." With AIDS, the gay community faced the traditional "fear and loathing" that has marked social responses to other diseases, plus the specific hostility centered on the association of AIDS with sex and homosexuality — particularly hostility to gay men's perceived promiscuity and pleasure-seeking lifestyles. Padgug tells us that because gay men had already set up their own communities, subcultures and institutions in response to historic marginalization, they were prepared to take initiative in all aspects of the epidemic's management. This has included providing care, conducting research, creating educational programs and working for governmental support. Additionally, gay men were able to develop new definitions of sex and sexuality, because gay sex itself was the product of a community.

Two *RA* articles integrate the personal aspects of lives touched by AIDS with a critique of mainstream conceptions of the epidemic — to create strong alternative visions for the lesbian/gay movement organized against AIDS: Cerullo's "Night Visions: Toward a Lesbian/Gay Politics for the Present," and Michael Bronski's "Death and the Erotic Imagination" (an

earlier version of the latter appeared in *GCN*, Sept. 7, 1986).

Cerullo's article is an articulate version of the traditional argument in favor of a lesbian and gay liberation strategy over a lesbian and gay rights strategy, framed in the context of the 1980s. The article begins by describing the "explosion of politics, this moment of rapture" represented by the National Lesbian and Gay March on Washington in October 1987, "where night visions emerge on daytime streets." Her central argument is that through organizing efforts like the March, the lesbian and gay

RADICAL AMERICA

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movement can publicly confront the law, public consciousness, and public morality, to "seize control of the meaning of gayness." As she comically states, "[E]very night we engage alone in acts of civil disobedience and we decided it was time to take the show on the road!" While the right to privacy proclaims our right to do what everyone does, liberation calls for public visibility of our differentness, including the "centrality of sexuality to our communities."

Cerullo basically argues that there is both a danger and a promise to claiming differentness. The danger is that this can be used to justify discrimination and oppression, and will be so used since heterosexuality is insecure and fragile. But claiming differentness also creates the possibility of a rebellious gay and lesbian culture that rejects the lies of respectability, right living and normality. While I am not clear on whom Cerullo means to indict when she also criticizes the "suspend all judgments" and let "a hundred lifestyles" bloom strain of thinking, her strategy and vision are compelling and inspiring.

Michael Bronski, in "Death and the Erotic Imagination," engages less in a discussion of strategy than in a discussion of consciousness. Bronski argues that death and sex must be integrated in a radical politics of AIDS. While both are taboo subjects, sex currently occupies a high social position and death a low one. Bronski encourages us to bring death out into the open, and does so by describing his feelings of losing 30 friends and partners, the support systems created by gay men to deal with death and the regularization of friends disappearing from bars and young men remembered in obituaries.

Bronski argues that we need to "politicize" death and "radicalize" sex. While the left has used the deaths of political activists as rallying cries for social change, death now needs to be "politicized," by which Bronski means it must be more openly discussed and become part of everyday life. And while sex has been made a conscious part of our everyday personal and political lives by sexual liberation and feminism, we now need to "radicalize" it — to reimagine and reconstruct it during a time when there is a strong connection between sex and death. While Bronski's formulaic use of the terms "politicize" and "radicalize" could use further clarification, his efforts to reconceptualize sex and death are unique and terribly important. For raising and exploring these issues as a gay activist touched deeply by death, the community has much to thank Bronski for.

We also have much to thank *RA* for. Their two issues represent a beginning, and we now anxiously await more articles — particularly ones that explore the new dialogue between lesbians and gay men *RA* says AIDS has opened, the movement of AIDS activist organizations like ACT UP, OUT and NOW, and the changing landscape of homophobia in the U.S. as lesbians and gay men achieve new visibility in the wake of the epidemic. □

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Hoover
Continued from page 10

motivated by their shared authoritarian ideology and hatred for dissent. Nevertheless, Hoover clashed with the administration over its proposed Huston Plan to destabilize the New Left because he feared that if word of the plan's illegalities got out, it would expose his own law-breaking.

In March, 1971, this nightmare came true when a self-proclaimed Citizens Commission to Investigate the FBI raided the Bureau's Media, Pennsylvania, office in the middle of the night. Among the numerous documents detailing illegal activities that the group released to the press was one describing the aim of COINTELPRO-New Left, to "enhance the paranoia epidemic in these circles and ... get the point across that there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox." Charges once dismissed as too outlandish to be taken seriously had now been officially confirmed, in the most damaging manner imaginable.

Further evidence of Hoover's abuses were uncovered during the post-Watergate congressional investigations into the conduct of the intelligence agencies. He had compiled an "Obscene File," secret dossiers on the private lives of politicians and other prominent individuals, deviously using subterfuge to assure deniability and protect those files from discovery. He used the information to neutralize opponents and assist allies, making them beholden to him. This was the prime source of his power. Victims were often unaware of the exact nature of accusations, and they had no way of combatting the webs of rumor and innuendo being spun against them.

According to Theoharis and Cox, Hoover's own personal life was deeply troubled, deviating dramatically from the almost mythical public persona. The son of a man who was institutionalized for depression, he was brought up by his stern, Calvinist mother and lived with her until her death when he was 43. Constantly striving to please her through extravagant acts of self-denial and self-accomplishment, he absorbed the worst aspects of the Protestant Ethic, including hatred for all that did not conform to its conventional world view.

The real Hoover was truly pathetic, a recluse tormented by insecurity, who had his lieutenants pester FBI personnel, repeatedly, for gifts and laudatory letters. He had an abiding phobia of micro-organisms and had his home toilet built on a platform to protect himself from them. Deeply repressed, he was scandalized by anarchist and "free love" advocate Emma Goldman, whom he had deported back to Russia in 1919. Thereafter he equated political radicalism with filth and licentiousness, and germ-phobia became a staple of his rhetoric.

He was obsessed with other people's sex lives, yet his 44-year relationship with top assistant and fellow bachelor Clyde Tolson inevitably focused unwanted attention upon himself. He was infuriated by the frequent rumors that he was homosexual. Bureau employees were instructed to report all such rumors immediately regardless of their context, and an agent would be dispatched to track down and intimidate the offender into silence.

The authors opine that Hoover and Tolson were not lovers — even though the two all but lived together, spending nearly all of their waking hours in each other's company. Whether or not they ever had sex is immaterial; something was going on to keep them together for so long. While allowing that he may have been a closet case, they make the arguable assertion: "The strange likelihood is that Hoover never knew sexual desire at all." Again, he may well have been a virgin throughout his life, but a man who surely ranks as the biggest voyeur of our time can hardly be said to have been without desire.

The 1975-76 Congressional hearings documenting Hoover's abuse of power led to demands for FBI reform: however, attempts to enact a charter to define how it would operate were not successful. Instead, Attorney General Edward Levi issued guidelines to govern "domestic security" investigations — regulations rescinded several years later by Ronald Reagan, who himself had served as a "special informant" for the agency during the Cold War.

The Iran-Contra scandal and the revelations of spying on those opposing the President's Central American policies are the in-

evitable consequence of Reagan's professed desire to "unleash" the intelligence agencies. The authors soberly conclude:

Congress's failure to enact an FBI legislative charter left the way open for another director-adventurer who, by exploiting a crisis atmosphere and supported by conservative anti-Communists, could reinstitute yet another reactionary scare and a wholesale repression. The potential for abuse did not die with Hoover in 1972.

While The Boss does have a few flaws, it is a monumental work, reminiscent of The Power Broker, Robert Caro's massive biography of New York's master builder Robert Moses (who also used his reputation for being "above politics" as cover for the most venal skullduggery.) Athan G. Theoharis and John Stuart Cox have written a work that should be required reading for all who are concerned by the insidious erosion of our freedoms to the dictates of the national security state. □

Chrystos, Luzma

Continued from page 7
spell: every Margarita must be joined with a Julia. Deliverance is completed in "The Mar/Garita Poem," where the "mummified, petrified" language of the poet, who finds herself "buried alive,/disconnected from Self the Muse/The Sea" is deconstructed so that a new language, free from patriarchal/colonialist orientations, may be invented.

...Ya la oigo venir,
viene silbando la mar,
ha roto su logica garita

[...At last I hear her coming,
the sea approaches whistling,
she has broken her logical guardhouse]

By breaking the guardhouse of white, male, colonialist logic, Luzma affirms the hope of Caribbean and Amazon insurrection. (Unfortunately, the effective puns and word games employed by Luzma are difficult to translate.)

Chrystos and Luz Maria Umpierre are the bards of suppressed peoples: their works are not merely personal chronicles, but are of a communal nature. Like Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands (Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987) and this Bridge Called My back, Not Vanishing and The Margarita Poems are meant to be read aloud, to be learned from, to serve as resources in both personal transformation and social activism. Both poets are generous, despite their fears that the wisdom of Third World women will somehow be appropriated and turned against them. Luzma depicts both the threat (in "No Hatchet Job"):

They would like
to put the tick and flea collar
around her neck and
take her for walks on sunny afternoons
in order to say to the neighbors:
"We have domesticated this unruly woman..."

and the response:

Eternally she breathes
one line after next,
unrestrained, unshielded...

As Chrystos aptly puts it: "Despite the books which still appear, even in radical bookstores, we are not Vanishing Americans." □

Bird-eyes

Continued from page 8
her, yet leaves her a fugitive forever.
Most of the small-press gay fiction I've had to read the past year or so I will never read again. But Bird-eyes haunts me, and when I'm feeling strong enough, I'll go back to it. Yes, it says, life is hell. But if you let yourself go numb, you've lost. It will take all the courage you've got and then some, but as long as you can feel pain, you are resisting, and as long as you resist, you're still free, however uncertainly. Bird-eyes is terrifying because it dares to face the hell of memory. And I find that I want to boast: a friend of mine, someone I know, wrote it. □

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Safer Sex and Drug Use Guidelines

Assessing individual risk for AIDS and other illnesses is the first step towards using safer sex and drug use guidelines. Only you and your partner(s) can decide how much risk is acceptable — take stock of your sexual and drug use histories.

Be aware that the highest concentrations of HIV (the virus widely thought to cause AIDS) are found in blood and semen. The most common routes of HIV transmission are through sharing needles and unprotected anal or vaginal intercourse.

GCN's guidelines come from a wide variety of sources aimed at various communities concerned about the AIDS epidemic and health in general. We want to confront the prevailing "no sex is best" attitude and present an approach that is as sex-positive as possible.

Information for gay male, lesbian and bisexual communities

Safer sex can include: massage, hugging, kissing, erotic talk, phone sex, masturbation (solo, pairs and groups), using your own vibrators, dildos or other sex toys and s/m, butch/fem role-playing, fantasy scenes, bondage and other activities that do not involve the exchange of semen or blood (including menstrual blood).

Do not allow a partner's semen or blood (including menstrual blood and blood drawn from piercing, cutting or shaving) to enter your vagina, anus, mouth or breaks in your skin.

Use condoms for fucking (anal and vaginal intercourse), for licking/sucking penises and for covering dildos and other sex toys. Use water-based lubricants. Use latex barriers (dental dams or other plastic/latex materials) between the genital area and mouth when licking/sucking cunts and assholes. Be especially careful to avoid the exchange of menstrual blood. Using nonoxynol-9 or other spermicides with condoms and latex barriers may add extra protection.

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penetration with fingers or hands), use latex gloves or finger cots. Use water-based lubricants.

Alternative insemination may put you at risk. Be sure to discuss risk for AIDS with potential donors or sperm bank.

Be aware that some risk of exposure to immune-suppressing infections (such as mono and amoebiasis) may be associated with rimming (anal-oral contact) — use a latex barrier. Risk may also be associated with watersports (urine) or feces in the mouth, rectum or in open cuts. If you share dildos, vibrators or other sex toys, use condoms or clean toys with hydrogen peroxide.

Your body's ability to fight all disease, including AIDS and its related illnesses (such as Kaposi's Sarcoma and pneumocystis carinii pneumonia), may be benefitted by general good health — good nutrition, lots of rest, exercise and nonabuse of alcohol, poppers and other drugs.

If you use IV drugs, follow the guidelines below.

Intravenous drug use

Do not share works (needles, syringes, droppers, spoons, cottons or cookers).

Do not re-use needles; use fresh cottons each time.

If you must share or re-use your works, clean them as follows: dip needle and works into 100 percent bleach, draw up and release three times, dip needle and works into water, draw up and release three times (in an emergency, rubbing alcohol, vodka or wine can also be used). As an alternative, boil works in water for at least fifteen minutes. Use a fresh solution each time you clean your works.

Resource phone numbers

National AIDS Hotline: 1 (800) 342-7514
AIDS Action Committee (AAC), Boston: (617) 437-7733
AIDS Action Committee (AAC) IV Drug Use Taskforce, Boston: (617) 437-4200
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), New York: (212) 807-6655
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Washington, D.C.: (202) 544-1076
Women's AIDS Network, San Francisco: (415) 864-4376

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Dinner
Continued from page 3

he explained, some of the papers contained brief notes whose authors are unknown. For example, one anonymous document stated that "gay couples are a social anomaly" and advised it would be "unrealistic and foolhardy not to recognize that gay couples do not have the endorsement of society."

Schwartz told the *Boston Globe* that Johnston and the administration do not endorse the language in that memo. Other documents reveal, however, similar musings. Beverly Johnston, a social worker who is married to Philip Johnston, sent a memo advising the secretary about the consequences of using gay foster/adoptive parents. She warned of "criticism of the administration from some people such as gays and liberals and some of the child welfare community who have been making such placements quietly."

Other documents indicate that although the state was suffering a serious shortage in homes needed for foster placement, the administration was intent on "better foster care," not "more foster care." In the summer of 1985, a memo to Dukakis from a staff member informed him "the vast majority" of correspondence received on the issue opposed the administration's policy.

Tony Doniger, attorney for Babets and Jean, withheld comment on the documents pending a thorough review. □

Foster care documents released

Since the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) ruling of August 15 rejecting the Dukakis administration's claim of "executive privilege," internal memoranda concerning the development of the foster care policy have been released to the public. Though it is not yet clear whether the documents will bolster the legal case of gay foster parents Donald Babets and David Jean against the state, the documents reveal an attempt by the Dukakis administration to weigh the political impact of the policy.

The papers include memoranda between Dukakis and other officials, drafts of speeches and press statements, hypothetical question and answer sessions, and informal opinions scrawled on notepaper. According to Ken Schwartz, chief of staff for state Secretary of Human Services Philip Johnston, the documents were not a part of the formal decision-making process. Therefore,

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS □ SEPTEMBER 4-10, 1988 □ PAGE 15



Young American for Freedom (L) tells gay activists to "keep it zipped" in New Orleans

Republicans

Continued from page 1

President George Bush's speech accepting the party's presidential nomination. The protesters asserted, "Louisiana pays for Republican Party while Americans Die." Their flyer charged, "Louisiana claims it cannot shoulder the cost of this life-saving drug, yet it spent \$800,000 on the Republican Party."

ACT UP demanded: "immediate release of State funds to pay for AZT until federal aid can be obtained[;] ... federal approval of a Medicaid waiver for Louisiana increasing allowable monthly income to \$1,062[; and] federal support for those persons who are not 'sick enough' to qualify for Medicaid, don't have private insurance and yet need AZT...."

Unfortunately, the 30-40 activists, including 10-15 New Orleans residents, were drowned out by the YAF counter-demonstrators. Apparently most delegates agreed with YAF's bigoted message, if not its outrageous tone. However, one California delegate, who refused to give his name, was visibly distraught at the sight of 100 young Republicans surrounding the smaller group of gay activists. "YAF is way off — they're an embarrassment to me and the party," he said.

ACT UP also led an Aug. 19 protest at three Circle K convenience stores in the French Quarter of the city. Circle K is an international corporation with most of its U.S. stores located in the South and Southwest. ACT UP stated that Circle K's employee insurance policy excludes coverage for workers who have AIDS, and urged people to boycott the chain until the policy is withdrawn.

Blood drives

Continued from page 3

donors. Both Arm in Arm and Irwin rigorously screen out all high risk donors. The allegations stem from Dr. Day's irrational homophobia and the unconscionable abuse of her position as a presumed medical authority." The press release stated that Day made no attempt to ascertain the demographics of the donor base.

The annual blood drive sponsored by the Harvey Milk Democratic Club was similarly affected by Day's allegations. Coordinator Lenora Chin said the site change was an "added inconvenience" and decreased participation in the all-women event. She accused Day of "personal and political" motives and effectively negating the campaign.

In a formal protest addressed to Dr. Julius Krevans, Chancellor of San Francisco General Hospital, blood drive organizers stated, "We feel that this is yet another example of uninformed AIDS-phobia being masked as public concern. We strongly urge that Dr. Day be censured for her actions..." They also expressed their disappointment in Irwin's compliance with Day's directive: "We are appalled that Dr. Day and Irwin Memorial Blood Bank would further jeopardize already endangered lives for such apparently self-serving interests as image and power."

Drive organizers presented their case in a meeting with the University of California at San Francisco medical school officials who responded by separating the hospital's position from Day's. USCF issued a statement denouncing donor "redlining" according to zip code in the face of the current blood

VOICE '88, the gay coalition, sponsored two press conferences to draw attention to gay rights and AIDS issues. An AIDS press conference on Wednesday was attended by 30-40 mainstream media organizations, and featured statements by Dr. Louise McFarland, chief of the Epidemiology Section for the Louisiana State Department of Health and Hospitals; Carole Pindaro, nursing coordinator for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded New Orleans AIDS Project; and Don Flagg, a nurse, a PWA, and Republican. Flagg said he had obtained a guest pass to the convention and that delegates and party officials were sympathetic to his plight.

A second press conference on Thursday was devoted to gay civil rights issues within the Republican party. U.S. Rep. Bill Green, who represents the East Side of Manhattan, spoke about his work on behalf of the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Bill (H.R. 709) and various pieces of AIDS legislation. In a prepared statement, Green observed: "[The Republican] Party is no stranger to progressive initiatives; it just needs to be reacquainted with them after a hiatus. Gay rights must be part of the Republican agenda and one day [it] will be..."

ACT UP also sponsored a demonstration Thursday against Louisiana's sodomy law. A heavy downpour forced the protesters under a gazebo near the state Supreme Court building, but a fundamentalist counter-demonstration stayed out in the rain chanting "AIDS is a Cure!" Marion Banzhaf, one of the organizers of the sodomy demonstration, said, "Just like we've been protesting AIDS, we are also concerned by the restrictions of lesbian and gay rights." □

shortage. Organizers also rallied successfully for political support through the mayor's office.

Yalon defended Irwin's decision to relocate the drives as an attempt to avoid controversy. "My interest was in [Irwin] not becoming a political football," he told *GCN*. He explained that media attention inevitably decreases the donor population and that his objective is to have the "greatest appeal to the greatest amount of people. We are not a political organization. Our policy was, is, and will be to collect blood on the basis of individual medical screening only." Yalon said he had hoped his action would "buy some time" and diffuse the media attention sparked by Day. Yalon said that had he anticipated the extensive media coverage of the relocations he would not have made the same decision. Irwin has since reinstated mobile blood drives in the Castro Street area.

Note: People with AIDS or ARC who live in Northern California and who need transfusion credits can contact Arm in Arm at 137 Caselli Ave., San Francisco, CA, 94114, or call (415) 522-9574.

□ filed from Boston

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CLASSIFIEDS

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Full time position in small, active, limited license lab in FCHC clinic.

BILLING CLERK

Full-time position includes data entry, telephone contact, and correspondence with third party payers.

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GAY/LESBIAN HELP- LINE COORDINATOR

Full-time position to recruit, train, and oversee volunteers, and staff helpline.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Challenging full time position for NP interested in general medicine and HIV-related illnesses, to work in innovative HIV treatment program, plus care for diverse client population. Will be based at Fenway Community Health Center. Experience preferred, enthusiasm required.

Fenway Community Health Center is an equal opportunity employer. People of color are encouraged to apply.

Resumes to: Personnel
Fenway Community Health Center
16 Haviland Street
Boston, MA 02115

ROOMMATE WANTED

E. Arlington 2LF seek LF for sunny, friendly, 4BR house washer/dryer, near T, Harvard Sq. No smoke, pets. \$400 incl. util 646-1243. (9)

3 feminists seek same to share 4 bedroom house in Medford. 15 min. walk to Davis Sq. Veggie, non-smoking \$270 plus utilities 787-0910. After 9/1 391-0822. (9)

LF 27-35 wanted to share spacious house in Davis Square. Warm, independent household. Two porches, small yard, near T. No smoking. Have cats. Rent \$275 including heat. Available October 1, possibly sooner. Call 776-4693. (9)

Room available in big, clean apt. full of art & oddities. Across from Davis T. Share w/1LF artist/smoker. No granola-heads, pets, alcoholics. \$300 plus utilities plus security deposit. 625-2159, 491-2996. (9)

PROGRESSIVE COOP HOUSE

We're looking for a M or F housemate for our Cambridgeport Home for October 1st. We are: 3 women, 2 men, mixed sexual orientation, mixed race, feminist, semi-veg. Call us if you are: fun, easy-going, responsible, politically aware and cat-free. 864-1466. (8)

COZY CAMBRIDGE

2LFs seek third for Cambridge apt. \$235/mo incl. heat. We are good humored, political and semi-coop with one cat. Nice floors, big kitchen, cozy w/back porch. Near Central and Harvard Sq. Call Amy or Nancy. 491-1124. (9)

Seeking independent/responsible person to share furnished two bedroom apartment in convenient Boston neighborhood. Near public transportation. Lots of amenities. No smokers/pets. High \$300-low \$400. Call 536-0147 Janet. (8)

MEETING HOUSE HILL

BLF, non-smoker, mostly veg., semi-chem. free, seeks LF 30 plus to share large 3 bdm. apt., W/D, sunny living room, eat-in-kitchen, porch, back yard, near Ronan Park., 10 min walk to T. Cat or Kid OK. You get 2 rms., \$420 month, plus 1/2 utils. Avlb. NOW CALL 265-7075. (8)

ROOMMATE WANTED

HOUSEMATE — UPPER CAPE

LF and dog looking for professional, independent responsible 30 plus LF to share 2 b/r duplex near beach. \$350 plus 1st/last. Avail 9/15 (508) 888-3893. Lv msg. (8)
2 LF's seek 3rd for sunny JP apt near T and Arboretum. Pets OK. \$335 plus. Avail now. 522-4368. (8)

NEWTON CORNER

LF/8 yr old M/1 cat, seeking 1 roommate for spacious 2nd fl apt. in Newton Cor. Available Sept. 1-15. \$350 plus util. Prefer non-alcoholic, non-smoker. Call 244-5029 and leave message. (8)

SOMERVILLE HOUSE

Four bedroom half of an owner-occupied two family house in Union Square. W/D, living and dining rooms, large kitchen, and screened porch. \$375 per month each. Call Jim at 666-9018. (8)

JAMAICA PLAIN

Two LF's and two cats seek housemate for spacious beautiful cooperative home near T and Pond. Deck, yard, w/d, fireplace, quiet street. \$400 heated, rent-controlled. Vegetarian non-smoker, no more pets. Available now. Call Carol 776-6019. (8)

2 LF seek 3 female housemates for multiracial household in J.P. Beautiful house, close to T. 250 plus utilities. Avail. 9/1. Jerri or Jan 524-1303. (9)

Natick — Two gay females seek same to share large private home. Non smoker, no pets. Conv. location. 350 plus utilities. Call 651-8240. (8)

3 LF's seek another for sunny spacious semi-coop home near Porter Square, Cambridge. We have 2 cats, no more pets, min. drugs or alcohol. Avail. Sept. 1, 250 plus call 491-4005. (8)

HOUSING WANTED

Berkeley dyke seeks room in lesbian/gay household til Dec. Maybe longer. Non-smoker, vegetarian. Financially stable. Jennifer 522-3104. (8)

PEE-WEE'S PLAYHOUSE

BiF 31 and 1yr old son looking to share friendly household in Cambridge/Somerville area. We need large bedroom, tospace, and an independent yet caring environment. No pets, drugs, cigs. \$300 plus. Call 391-3041 and leave message. (9)

Two responsible, wonderful women seeking sunny, beautiful 5-6 room apartment in Jamaica Plain, Sept. 1. Non-smokers, non-drinkers. Call Lisa or Story, (617) 522-4720, (617) 522-5381. (8)

I STILL NEED A HOME!

Gay man (26) seeking home by Sept. 1 in Boston/Cambridge area. I school and work in Cambridge and would like to move in with others committed to mostly independent, friendly, cohabitation. 300 including, tops. Kenji, 262-7320. (8)

APARTMENTS

2 BEDROOM/ON T

Ashmont Lower Mills, great location, tree lined street one block from T. 2 bedrooms, L, D, eat-in kitchen w/pantry, disposal, w/d hook-up, porch, plenty of on street parking, gay owner occupied, no pets. 750 plus util. 436-4507 (8)

FOR SALE

LOWELL CONDO...PRICED TO SELL

2 bedroom 1 1/2 bath 1300 sq. ft. townhouse, fully appliances, central air. W/D hookup, excellent location. \$99K 395-1602 lve. message. (10)

VACATIONS

P-TOWN TIMESHARE

1 BR floating week Eastwood at Provincetown sleeps 4. Exchange internationally. Must sell. Call or write (413) 628-4691, S. Waldman, P.O. Box 409, Hadley, MA 01035. (13)

WHITE MOUNTAIN MAGIC

Enjoy spectacular fall foliage at our 100 acre mountain resort. With 19 charming guest rooms, pool, hot tub, fireplace common rooms and miles of trails, we're just what you need! Ask about our holiday plans too! The HIGHLANDS INN, Box 118G, Bethlehem, NH 03574. (603) 869-3978. Grace and Judi, Innkeepers. (17)

GREENHOPE FARM

Escape to the peace and privacy of Vermont. Secluded lesbian farm offers veg. cuisine, cozy rooms with views and daily trail rides on our own gentle horses. Waterfall skinny dipping. Early fall foliage. (802) 533-7772. (9)

ORGANIZATIONS

MAN/BOY LOVE

Intergenerational Love Support Group. World wide news, art, opinions. Application, information free, bulletin \$1. NAMBLA, P.O. Box 1923, St. Louis, Missouri, 63118. (7)

OLDER LESBIAN ENERGY

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174. (15.48)

BLACK AND WHITE MEN TOGETHER

Multiracial group for all people. Call (415) 431-1976 or write BWMT, suite 140, 580 Castro St. SF, CA, 94114. (16.1)

BOSTON ALLIANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH

Social support group for youth 22 and under. Wed. night general meeting from 7:30-9pm. New persons meeting at 6:00. Women's meeting at 6:45. Call 482-7858 for info. (15.32)

PUBLICATIONS

BAD ATTITUDE

A lesbian sex magazine. Irreverent and Hot! \$10 for one year's subscription (3 issues). B.A. Inc., P.O. Box 110, Cambridge, MA 02139. (16.33)

BLACK/OUT

The new quarterly magazine from the National coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, features news, views, reviews, poetry, short fiction and announcements of interest to the national Black Lesbian and Gay community. Sample copy, \$4, 1 yr. subscription, (4 issues) \$10. To: Black/Out., NCBLG, P.O. Box 2490, Washington, DC 20013. (ex)

OUTRAGEOUS WOMEN

A journal of woman-to-woman s/m. Fantasy, analysis, erotic art and much more. Sub: \$13/4pr issues. Single issues \$4. Must state you are over 18. SASE for info. PO Box 23, Somerville MA 02143. (ex)

PUBLICATIONS

WOMAN OF POWER: "A Magazine of Feminism, Spirituality, and Politics," an inspiring international quarterly publication. Subscriptions \$22 for 4 issues; singles issues \$6 plus \$1 postage. P.O. Box 827, Cambridge, MA 02238, telephone (617) 625-7885. (ex)

ON OUR BACKS, the sexual entertainment magazine for lesbians, is 48 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news columns. We are quarterly, national, unique and provocative. \$15/yr sub or \$5 current issue to: On Our Backs, PO Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142. (ex)

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree-who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1.50; sub \$6; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, #263G, SF, CA 94114. (16.--)

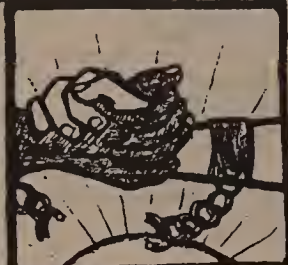
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Prisoners Seeking Friends

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Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*



Prisoner Support resources: Legal Associates West; PO Box 6248, Santa Barbara CA 93160 (805)964-9232; and Prisoners Union, 1315 18th St, San Francisco, CA 94107 (Resource Guide).

EXERCISES

A GCN Prisoner Project member (Tiyo) has put together a great pamphlet on exercising (no machinery needed). If you want one (FREE), just write.

NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) Bulletins available to persons imprisoned for sex with minors. Write Rock Thatcher, Box 70810. Ft Lauderdale FL 33307.

BLACK/OUT: A new publication called Black/Out is looking for artwork and letters from Black gay & lesbian prisoners. Let them hear from you! They can't answer all the letters they get so don't always expect responses, but they very much need to hear your voices. Send to: Joseph Beam, PO Box 2314, Philadelphia PA 19103.



23 yr old black male looking for someone to start a relationship/friendship who's basically the dominant type, but not the type that's into chains and beatings and stuff of that nature, just a nice kinda guy that enjoys a passive lover. I'm not a whiner and will speak my mind and let my lover know exactly what I think of any given situation and I expect the same. I enjoy rock music and concerts, biking, keeping fit, swimming and making love, especially on cold rainy days. I'm not looking for a person to support me, just a lover friend and someone I can trust. I'm not lazy and enjoy cooking, cleaning and taking care of my man, not to mention spoiling him rotten to the core! (I can have visits, so you can come see me if you like.) Wayne GARRETT, 48771, Rt 2 Box 176, Tipton MO 65081.

I have a very strong desire to correspond with a "Drag Queen". I'm a black male, 26, coffee brown complexion and my interests are chess, reading, writing, and baseball. It would be especially nice if you live in this part of the country, but if abroad that would be nice also. Duane THOMAS, PO Box 137, Tillery NC 27887.

Very lonely here in prison, love romance, movies, parks, outdoors, love to answer sexy love letters, all the way. Please write me guys. Richard NICHOLS, Box 629-64084, Florence AZ 85232.

37 yr old black bisexual male who would like to hear from someone out there in the free world who has sincere feelings. Robert Lee ANDERSON, EF-EF-166918, 4600 Fulton Mill Rd, Macon GA 31213.

This unique as well as extraordinary male! wishes to correspond on a nation-wide level with all and any lucious gay, bi and trans-SEXUALS. This once in a lifetime experience could last forever, so why delay. Get back right away, because it's you our fantasy can be built upon! Donald BENNETT, Drawer K, M-7669, Dallas PA 18612.

26 yr old gay prisoner seeking friendship with an understanding and caring gay man if possible. I am into reading, music, bodybuilding, poetry and meeting new people. Dwayne WILLIAMS, 089862 (C-53), Box 500, Olustee FL 32072.

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236-1848



Hello, I'm enjoyed the sample paper you sent me. Please send more. I'm 19, a Scorpio, and looking for someone to be friends with. Your photo gets mine. Color and age means nothing. Patricia MORIN, 627913-101, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.

Female, age 22, pretty and love to write letters. I'm very lonely as I am very quiet. I like wild flowers, long walks in the woods, and a special friend. Looking for a lady with feeling. Lisa NELSON, 152079 (340), PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.



It really feels good to know there are some people like you (GCN) out there that still care about us. (My mom and dad still haven't written and though it hurts I try not to let it affect my deepest thoughts and feelings. I've never placed an ad before and I really don't know what to say. I enjoy dancing, movies, social partying, animals, jogging, hiking, camping and am a very sensitive person and not incarcerated for anything very bad (breaking and entering; trespassing). Can you put an ad together out of this? Thanks for being there.. Rusty PRATER, 191-066, Box 45699, Lucasville OH 45699.

Dazzling hazel eyes, seeking quality friendship. I'm a very easy going guy in need of respect and in return you get my respect in all sincerity. Please respond to Steve BURTON, 860830, PO Box 30, Pendleton IN 46064

Hi! Are you a sweet, small and sexy transvestite, free from ties (meaningful relationship) and very affectionate and compassionate? Do you have time to take an interest in this Scorpio? I've spent many years searching for the girl of my dreams but I've found nothing but ups, downs and turn arounds. Come show me the way. Andy Lee COUCH, 365097, Rt 1 Box 16, Lovelady TX 75851.

I'm new into gay life. I'm into the gay rights movement, safe sex, art, music, sports and animals. Looking for a special friend and someone who cares. Carl SMITH, Rt 1 Box 36, Jackson NC 27845.

I'm looking for someone in Cal. who could take an interest in my attempt to get transferred to the Cal. system on an interstate transfer so I can be near my lover in San Luis Obispo (prison). If you think you could help, please write me at: James Rodney CODY, 257061, PO Box 520 IMU, Walla Walla WA 99362.

I'm trying to find a penpal that wouldn't mind writing to somebody that's doing time in Michigan's Prison System. I'd like to write to somebody that's single and a homosexual or bisexual. Thank you. Rick ROBERSON, 174041, Box E, Jackson MI 49204.

Well, folks, my time is almost done. I've seen and learned a lot and found a better outlook at myself. A lot of you have lost my address, but I'll never forget those who were true to me. Also I'm looking for new friends in New York City because I'm planning to go there to relocate. So write me please. Roy KNIER, 86C 125, Box 500, Elmira NY 14902

I would hopefully like to find Mr. Right. I'm a clean cut, bodybuilding gay male, 8 in. cut. Love reading, music, the outdoors, and much more. Don HONEYCUTT, 94934, Box 97, McAlester OK 74502.

Freaky Transvestite, 18, Puerto Rican, wants to have a true trusting relationship. I like all kinds of music mostly disco. So first come first serve. Smile. Troy RIVERA, 84B 0653, Box 51, Comstock NY 12821.

All you hot men and women that are bisexual, I will do anything to please my lover except S&M. My hobbies are reading and writing, listening to music, and having all kinds of fun in bed. So all you well hung men and you hot muffins, pick up your pen and let's get to know one another. My house name is Miss Choice. John PARKS, 87B 315, Box 500, Elmira NY 14902

Certified Ordained Minister in confinement for loving two teenage boys would like to write young and old alike, regardless of skin color or religious belief. Darryl BUCKINGHAM, 400408, Ramsey 2, Rt 4 Box 1200, Rosharon TX 77583.



Calendar



John Weber

3 Saturday through 8 Thursday □
Be the first on your block to get chickenized! Join the Frank Chickens, a London-based Japanese girl group/performance art duo nightly through September 8 at the Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St., Cambridge. Info: 876-6837.

Please note: Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos with listings are encouraged.

3 Saturday

Boston □ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project** presents a workshop every Saturday to collect the experiences and stories of those connected in any way with the AIDS crisis. The goal is to create a theater music piece based on the workshop material. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Boston □ **Jeopardy**, to benefit The Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau. Part of Club Cabaret's "Summer Games, a Month of Benefits." MoonShine, 209 Columbus Ave. 8-10pm. \$4. Info: 536-0972.

Boston □ Boston Area Women's Self-Defense Collective offers **Women's Self-Defense Classes** for women of all ages and abilities. Meets Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons in the South End. Info: 574-9433.

Cambridge □ **Frank Chickens** are back by popular demand. Musical cabaret performance from Japan, England, and beyond. Through 9/8. Plus film showing of the original **The Blob**. Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St. 9:30pm nightly. \$10. Info: 876-6837.

4 Sunday

Dorchester □ Dorchester GALA **potluck**. Info: Dennis 436-0148, Barbara 282-2962.

Boston □ Metro Healing presents **ongoing healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Sunday. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

Boston □ **Boston's Other Voice** special guest Will Hutchinson talks about romance and politics. With host Peter Stickel. WROR 98.5FM. 11:30pm.

5 Monday

Boston □ **Women's Rugby Club** fall practice every Monday and Wednesday, 6-8pm. No experience necessary. Info: Mel 536-4943, message 932-5401.

6 Tuesday

Boston □ **MASS ACT OUT** sponsors a community activist strategy meeting to create a community-wide network of organizations and individuals who can be quickly mobilized to respond to any Senate action which would threaten the passage of the lesbian/gay rights bill. Piemonte Rm., 5th floor, City Hall. 7pm. Info: 661-7737.

Cambridge □ **Bisexual Women's Rap**. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-10pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Providence, RI □ **ACT-UP Rhode Island** has meetings open to the public every Tuesday. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. ACT-UP RI, PO Box 3156, Wayland Square Station, Providence, RI 02906. Info: Bill 617/782-9063.

Cambridge □ Evening of **prayer, meditation and discussion** for all affected by AIDS. Everyone welcome. Christ Church, Zero Garden St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 876-0200.

Cambridge □ Workshop on **therapeutic touch** includes lecture, demonstration, and practice of technique. Healers' Resource Center, 5 Upland Rd. 7-10pm. \$8. Info: 864-1989.

7 Wednesday

Boston □ **Women's Self-Defense Classes**. See 8/3 listing.

Boston □ **Women's Rugby Club**. See 9/5 listing.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge □ **MASS ACT OUT** weekly meeting. M.I.T., Building 66, Rm. 126. 7:30pm. Info: 661-7737.

Boston □ **Boston NOW** Open House, followed by NOW Issues Forum. 971 Commonwealth Ave. 7pm. Free. Info: 782-1056.

8 Thursday

Boston □ **GCN's production night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 426-4469.

Boston □ **MASS ACT OUT** sponsors a planning and organizing session for the ACT NOW civil disobedience in Washington. Piemonte Rm., 5th floor, City Hall. 7:30pm. Info: 661-7737.

Cambridge □ **Lesbians Choosing Children**. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-9:30pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Boston □ Metropolitan Community Church **Women's Night Out**. An opportunity for women to get acquainted after service. 131 Cambridge St. 7pm. Info: 523-7664.

9 Friday

Boston □ **GCN mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 426-4469.

Boston □ **Ongoing healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Friday. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

Cambridge □ **Women's Coffeehouse**, open to all women. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-midnight. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

W. Medford □ **Lesbian Lawyers and Legal Workers** meeting. New members welcome. 6pm. Free. Info: 483-3685.

Worcester □ AIDS Project — Worcester **support group** meets every Friday night for HIV positive, PWA's, PWARC's, lovers, friends, and the worried well. Open to all lesbians and gay men regardless of HIV status. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana, 508/755-3773.

10 Saturday

Boston □ **Women's Self-Defense Classes**. See 8/3 listing.

Boston □ **Amethyst Women** dance. A drug- and alcohol-free event for lesbians and their women friends. All women welcome. YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. 9pm-1am. \$6 more or less.

Northampton □ **SHELIX**, a New England woman-to-woman S/M support group, presents a night of lesbian erotic videos, including footage of the International Ms. Leather Contests of '87 and '88. All women welcome. 8pm. \$2. Info: 413/584-7616.

Boston □ Boston **Bisexual Women's Network** holds a potluck picnic/barbecue. Bring food, non-alcoholic beverages, frisbee, volleyball, friends, etc. All women welcome. Herder Park, across from Channel 4, Soldiers Field Rd. 2-6pm. Info: 247-6683.

11 Sunday

Boston □ **Metro Healing**. See 9/4 listing.

Lincoln □ **Picnic** for women and babies or young children. Rain date 9/18. Lincoln Green, off Trapelo Rd., next to Town Hall. Look for bright orange highway marker. 1 pm.

Boston □ Join **Am Tikva**. Boston's community of lesbian and gay Jews, for Rosh Hashanah Services. Egalitarian Liturgy, wheelchair accessible. YWCA auditorium, 140 Clarendon St. 7pm. Donation. Info. & reservations: 782-8894.

Carlisle □ Join the **Chiltern Mountain Club** for a two hour walk through Great Brook Farm State Park. Ice cream after the hike. Info: Keena 508/263-6936.

12 Monday

Boston □ **Women's Rugby Club**. See 9/5 listing.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Rap** topic: "Lesbians and Disabilities." The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge □ Boston **Bisexual Women's Network** introductory meeting. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-9:45pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

13 Tuesday

Cambridge □ **Bisexual Women's Rap**. See 9/6 listing.

Providence, RI □ **ACT-UP Rhode Island** meets. See 9/6 listing.

14 Wednesday

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Boston □ Meet to help form the Boston Chapter of the **National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays** (NCBLG). "Each one bring one." All interested parties are welcome to attend. 312 Stuart St., 3rd floor. 7pm. Info: 491-6851.

Framingham □ Showing of **Sammy and Rosie Get Laid**, with discussion to follow. Sponsored by the South Middlesex Chapter of NOW. Framingham Public Library. 7:30pm.

Boston □ **Boston NOW** Reproductive Rights Task Force meeting. 971 Commonwealth Ave. 7pm. Free. Info: 782-1056.

Boston □ **NAMES Project** general meeting to coordinate plans to bring the AIDS Quilt to Washington, DC in October. Piemonte Rm., 5th floor, City Hall. 7pm. Info: Tim 262-4831.

CALENDAR COMPILED BY
TODD HOLLISTER

Celluloid rebellion

The queerest kind of film



Scenes from **Mayhem**

The Second Annual New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival. Sixty-two films by 58 filmmakers. At Millenium, Manhattan. September 13-18.

By Elizabeth Pincus

For a knock-out combo of B-movie luridness and psycho-sexual provocation, check out Abigail Child's *Mayhem*, a featured presentation of the Second New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival. The rapid-fire delivery of *Mayhem* coupled with its shadowy suggestion of murderous intent creates a jittery unease, a curious and creepy titillation. This 20 minute bombardment of noir-ishly posed women and glowering men is more than detective story: it's a hyper-

film

modern melding of forms, an erotic send-up of slapstick with a heady dose of cultural nay-saying. Just when you think all the men in the film are criminals and the women merely crime victims, Child throws in some outlaw sex between women and other hints of feminine insubordination. Granted, the sex shots are vintage clips of Japanese pornography, surely not a milieu of womanly self-determination, but that's all part of the quizzical muck of the aptly-titled *Mayhem*.

Plenty of other compelling and/or confounding films will screen at the festival, a dizzying presentation of upstart cinema which runs from September 13-18 at New York's Millennium. This annual showcase of independent, experimental films by lesbians and gay men reveals wildly varying viewpoints and broad stylistic territory ranging from the murky to the lucid. The 62 offerings dished up this year will surely please hungry cinephiles — gay and straight — who welcome a chance to drop-kick narrative form right out of the stadium for a week of dissolution, disassembling and just plain disarray.

Not that festival planning was slapdash; far from it. In their first go-around last year, festival organizers Jim Hubbard and Sarah Schulman attracted 2,000 viewers, the largest audience ever for an experimental film event in New York City. This year's line-up has expanded and includes more

work from newcomers and from independents well-known in experimental film: George Kuchar, Su Friedrich, Chantal Akerman, James Broughton and others.

According to Hubbard and Schulman, film publications and exhibitors have expressed great interest in the festival, perhaps realizing a truism self-evident in queer circles — that the outcast experience of lesbians and gay men can lend a vital edge, a restless agitation to movie-making. Schulman sums it up. "The best filmmakers are gay," she quips, an admittedly biased glint in her film-groupie eye.

Indeed, the festival selections I previewed were a cut above the average alternative showcase. Whereas other lesbian and gay film festivals are often plagued by commercial concerns, and debate — both internally and community-wide — over the nature of lesbian/gay cinema (films made by queers? about queers? queer-affirmative?), this festival embraces it all and moves a step further. An accompanying panel discussion will explore the question, "Does radical content require radical form?" And the feisty panoply of offerings includes at least two films which caused outcry at previous lesbian and gay festivals, Akerman's *Je Tu Il Elle* and *Ten Cents a Dance (Parallax)* by Midi Onodera.

Along with *Mayhem*, other festival jewels include *No Photo Required*, Larry Brose's four-minute wash of images concerning emotions in the aftermath of a friend's death from AIDS. Similarly effective is a black and white short by Ruth Gumnit, *Walkin' With M*, which traces footsteps down a city street with the spare elegance of a hand-held super-8 camera. Graceful shadows and teasing close-ups of M's face add to the film's enchantment. Several films from decades past throw some political perspective on this stuff of cutting edge experimentation. For example, Michael Wallin's *The Place Between Our Bodies*, produced in 1975, offers an uncommonly explicit exploration of gay male sexuality, still raw and affecting more than ten years down the sex-radical road. My favorite new work among those I saw is Friedrich's *Gently Down the Stream*, both a dreamy evocation of obsessions, including filmmaking

itself, and a luscious examination of women, water and work-outs.

Animation is featured in the festival as well, from the amoeba-like globs of Peggy Collen's *Life and Death* to the layered complexities in *Endangered*, a new film about nature's fragility by Barbara Hammer. This screening marks the world premiere of *Endangered*, which will be preceded by several other Hammer films. Documentaries, roughly defined, also have a place, though most entries eschew classic talking head form. Instead, we get the visual smorgasbord of Jim Hubbard's *Stop the Movie (Cruising)*, an energizing glance at street resistance, and the intensely personal revelations and lively period images of *Working Class Chronicle* by Jack Walsh. John Greyson presents *A Moffie Called Simon*, a tribute to Black gay activist Simon Nkoli, on trial for treason in South Africa.

The organizers have clumped festival screenings into loosely structured theme nights. Thus you can seek out, for example, the cream of the new works (September 15, 9 p.m.), films from Germany and France (September 13, 7 p.m.), or shorts by women (September 15, 7 p.m.). Two full-length features will screen: Akerman's renowned *Je Tu Il Elle* (September 16, 9 p.m.) and *Kamikaze Hearts*, by Juliet Bashore (September 13, 9 p.m.). Both are troubling, engrossing journeys into the guts of lesbian sexuality, and bold challenges to the conventions of story-telling on celluloid.

Certainly there are spots of tedium in the festival, the kind of drippingly self-important films that make me crave a good old action thriller. But even the denser of the experimental films are often intriguing, or at least visually snaring. A few of the films were unavailable for preview, such as Lisa Guay's *The Quest*, an instructional piece about vaginal fisting. With experimentation like *that* going on, I may have to take another field trip to New York.

For complete festival listings, pick up a schedule at Millennium, 66 East 4th Street or at the Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White Street in New York. Ticket prices are \$5 per show, or \$30 for a festival pass. For more information, call (212) 865-1499. □

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